

BRAINWASHING IN SCIENTOLOGY'S REHABILITATION PROJECT FORCE (RPF)

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Abstract

This study examines the confinement programs and camps that Scientology operates as supposedly rehabilitative facilities for "deviant" members of its "elite" Sea Organization. These programs, known collectively as the Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF), put coerced participants through regimes of harsh physical punishment, forced self-confessions, social isolation, hard labour, and intense doctrinal study, all as part of leadership-designed efforts to regain members' ideological commitment. The confinement that participants experience, combined with forms of physical maltreatment, intensive ideological study, and forced confessions, allows social scientists to speak of the RPF as a "brainwashing" program.

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Introduction

As an international institution requiring total compliance from its confined participants, Scientology's Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF) is unique among contemporary ideological organizations operating in the Western world. While other organizations (such as The Family/The Children of God) have operated analogous programs (see Kent and Hall, 1997), the RPF has existed for over 20 years. Established in January, 1974, the RPF is a program of hard physical labour, forced confessions, and intense ideological study. Scientology insists that the program is designed to correct staff members' problems in order to allow them to remain in its elite Sea Org and operate effectively in it. Critics insist that its purpose is to break the will of inmates in a manner that minimizes people's abilities to operate outside of the ideological constraints of the organization. They also argue that it provides Scientology with a labour force that receives almost no salaries. In any case, newspapers have reported on the program since at least 1984, with stories appearing in American, British, Danish, and German media. No academic accounts about it exist, however, even though its operation has direct bearing on an issue that many social scientists consider closed--the extent to which so-called new religions utilize "brainwashing" techniques on their members.

This study argues that brainwashing--"the systematic, scientific[,] and coercive elimination of the individuality of the mind of another" (Schefflin and Opton 1978: 40)--is a social scientifically appropriate concept for analyzing Scientology's imposition of reindoctrination programs within the confinement conditions experienced by inmates in the RPF and its more severe extension, the RPF's RPF. It constructs this argument using primary documents that Scientology's founder, L. Ron Hubbard, either wrote or disseminated, as well as legal documents, interview transcripts, and media accounts. These documents and

other items help identify Scientology's historical and organizational contexts out of which the RPF emerged, and they provide extended glimpses into actual RPF operations in several locations during particular periods. Of special interest to scholars is the study's use of Scientology publications from the mid-1950s and late 1960s that specifically discuss brainwashing techniques. Not only, therefore, is brainwashing an appropriate social scientific term to use when describing the RPF, but also it is a term that coincides with Scientology's own descriptions about forcing attitude change within confined environments.

The "Brainwashing Debate" within the Social Sciences

The "brainwashing debate" in the social sciences took place mostly in the 1980s and early 1990s, when several professional organizations, professors, and scholars reacted against American courts accepting arguments that so-called new religions "coerced" members into conversion. Much of the sociological attack

targetted psychologist Margaret Singer, Ph.D., who used a coercive persuasion/brainwashing model to explain to courts how litigants joined and behaved in the groups they now were suing or defending against.

The social scientific attacks concluded that the brainwashing term was valid only if the group in question used incarceration and physical maltreatment against members (see Anthony, 1990: 304) in situations of uninformed consent (Young and Griffith, 1992: 93). This threefold requirement was a minimalist one, since a brainwashing program also would have to include an intense indoctrination program coupled with personal confessions of past "sins." Since neither the term's supporters or detractors provided concrete evidence that even these minimalist activities uniformly occurred in most groups'

conversion activities, sociologists and others concluded that "brainwashing" was not an appropriate term for describing how and why people join new or controversial religions.

Of these requirements for using the brainwashing term, the single most important one was "extreme physical coercion" (Anthony and Robbins, 1992: 20, 25n.11). If such a condition existed, then it would allow both researchers and the courts to isolate brainwashing from other forms of coercive persuasion. As Robbins and Anthony concluded, "[without] physical force as a boundary, there is no natural or objective cutting point as to when coercive persuasion is potent enough to overcome free will" as the brainwashing model implies (Anthony and Robbins, 1992: 21).

One crucial aspect of brainwashing in litigation has been an effort to specify when courts should allow individuals to use the concept as an excuse for deviant or illegal behaviour. Researcher Dick Anthony (often working with associate Tom Robbins) developed much of the theory in this area, and served as a consulting expert for lawyers defending the Unification Church, Scientology, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Transcendental Meditation, and the Community Chapel against brainwashing allegations from disgruntled former members (Anthony and Robbins, 1992: 6n.1). Anthony and Robbins concluded that some attempts to utilize "cultic brainwashing" to justify exemptions from (American constitutional) protections of religions presuppose that brainwashing is a form of "hard determinism" which assumes that people are confined in ideological systems whose doctrines they must adopt (Anthony and Robbins, 1992: 23). Human behavior explanations that postulate hard determinism, Anthony and Robbins claim, "do not have general, or even substantial acceptance in the relevant scientific communities" (presumably sociology and psychology), and they are "no longer taken seriously in the academic world" (Anthony and Robbins, 1992: 25). Consequently, in future attempts to assess "the resemblance of the theologies of religious groups to totalitarian ideologies," Anthony and Robbins hope that researchers will focus upon "the free marketplace of ideas rather than upon increased governmental regulation of religious ideas or on the outcome of trials..." (Anthony and Robbins, 1992: 26). In other words, these respected social scientists believe that research into whether religious groups brainwash has concluded that they do not do so at least in a hard deterministic way, and this conclusion eliminates any need for discussion about governmental or legal intervention against religions on now-disproven grounds that they brainwash their members into robots who commit deviant or criminal acts.

RPF Accounts in the Courts and the Media

Remarkably, however, throughout much of this debate, the popular press, some court documents, and at least one court appellate decision described the forced confinement, maltreatment, and uninformed consent that Sea Org members experienced in Scientology's RPF program and facilities. These descriptions were of a brainwashing program used to retain members rather than to obtain them, and perhaps for this reason social scientists neglected to address these accounts.

The first public statement about the RPF seems to have appeared in a January 25, 1980 affidavit by former member Tonya Burden of Las Vegas, Nevada, who described it as "a Scientology 'concentration camp'" (Burden, 1980: 8) and from which she escaped after having been in the program for around three months (Burden, 1980: 9-10). Former member Gerry Armstrong supported Burden's general description of RPF conditions in a June, 1982 affidavit, stating that he "personally observed people [including Tonya Burden] in the RPF sleeping on floors, in storage rooms, in the boiler room, and in other sub-human conditions..." (Armstrong, 1982: 3).

Armstrong and two other former members, Laurel Sullivan and William Franks, spoke harshly about the RPF in a 1984 article in the Florida newspaper, the Clearwater Sun. Franks called it "'a horrible thing'" (quoted in Shelor, 1984: 1B), and Sullivan spoke about how "'rough'" the program was, having "to work in 120- degree heat [in the California desert] with a severe case of colitis'" (quoted in Shelor, 1984: 2B). In that same year, Great Britain's The Sunday Times Magazine carried RPF descriptions from three more former members--Bent Corydon, Jay Hurwitz, and David Mayo:

Hurwitz said that for the first five days he and others were kept locked up under guard. 'We were brought our food and we slept on the floor. We had to use the same toilet facilities in the presence of one another' (Barnes, 1984: 38).

Hurwitz was at the RPF near Gilman Hots Springs, California in the summer of 1982, along with eighteen other senior Scientology staffers (Barnes, 1984: 38-39). Also in 1984, a British court stated in a written decision that, two years earlier, a woman in Scientology's English headquarters in East Grinstead was "required to do at least 12 hours physical work a day (shifting bricks, emptying bins, etc.)" which "aggravated a chronic back condition" (Royal Courts of Justice, 1984: 27). This same story reappeared in the excellent study written by Englishman Jon Atack in 1990 (Atack, 1990: 341), and then in a newspaper article in 1994 (Bracchi, 1994).

Back in the United States, former member Don Larson told Forbes magazine in 1986 that: he alone brought nearly 300 recalcitrant Scientologists to 'Rehabilitation Project Forces' at Scientology centers around the world over a period of fourteen months, until his departure in late 1983... In these sadistic detention programs, staff members would be coerced into performing hard labor, eating leftovers out of buckets and sleeping on floors. Some were reportedly kept against their will (Behar, 1986: 318).

The year after the Forbes article, British biographer Russell Miller (1987) published his account of Hubbard's life, which contained nearly a dozen references to the RPF.

A 1989 California appellate court decision indicated that, "continuously for three weeks," former Scientologist Larry Wollersheim had been "'baited and badgered'" to enter the RPF, which the judge mentioned as "evidence [that] Wollersheim accepted some of his auditing [i.e., religious counselling] under threat of physical coercion" (California Court of Appeal, 1989: 9274). The accounts of Franks, Sullivan, and former Sea Org staff member Hana Whitfield appeared again in a series on the organization that the Los Angeles Times published in 1990 (Welkos and Sappell, 1990). The article indicated that "[t]he RPF provides the church with a pool of labor to perform building maintenance, pull weeds, haul garbage, clean toilets or do anything else church executives deem necessary for redemption" (Welkos and Sappell, 1990: [25]). In the same year as the Los Angeles Times series, Jon Atack's thorough study of his former group contained significant RPF information (Atack, 1990: 206, 341, 358, etc.; see also Atack, n.d.: 9-10). Finally, as recently as 1996, the RPF received attention in a Scientology study produced by former member Bent Corydon (1996)--himself having been an RPF inmate. Taken together, these legal and media sources

strongly suggest that the RPF is a brainwashing facility according to the requirements that Anthony (1990) and Young and Griffith (1992) specify, but no social scientists pursued an investigation.

Methodological Issues

Perhaps one reason that social scientists have not examined the brainwashing dynamics of the RPF is because its study presents some unusual methodological obstacles that they must overcome in order to obtain appropriate information. First, Scientology has made out-of-court settlements with former RPF victims, and these settlements include agreements that they will not speak critically and publically against the organization. I know of at least five people--two Americans, two Canadians, and one New Zealander--who entered into such agreements.

Second, Scientology keeps confidential the key series of documents that define the RPF's operation. These documents appear in the Flag Order 3434 series (containing at least fifty-six separate issues), and only a small number of them have leaked out to researchers. Consequently, it remains impossible to trace the development of the RPF program through the organization's most relevant documents, which means that scholars' best information sources remain the accounts of former members.

Third, former members who went through the RPF are difficult to find and, once found, often are reluctant to speak with a researcher. The difficulty of finding former RPF inmates stems partly from the fact that the program's design is to feed repentant (and some would say emotionally broken) Sea Org members back into the organization. Consequently, many potential informants remain in Scientology under threat of being either ex-communicated or sent back into the RPF itself for talking negatively about their time in it. Moreover, as RPF participants they spent countless (and in some cases, hundreds) of hours confessing to alleged sins and crimes, and they fear that the organization would use these confessions against them if they were to talk. Indeed, the RPFers who complete their programs must write or sign a statement before they leave which praises the RPF and extols its virtues. For all of these reasons, I did not attempt to interview active Scientologists who had been RPF inmates. Any criticism or negative statements that informants might have made about their experiences likely would have had dire consequences for them.

For this study, therefore, I interviewed six people who had been on RPFs in different parts of the world, plus I collected court documents, affidavits, and correspondence from fourteen more. In addition, I interviewed a person who had witnessed the RPF in operation (but had not participated in it), and collected accounts (through personal correspondence, anonymous newsgroup postings, and legal documents) from eight additional individuals who also claim to have seen inmates on the program. In addition to the information by and from these twenty-nine people, I collected primary Scientology documents and publications that discuss the RPF, along with accounts of it from the popular press. The picture that emerges from these sources shows variations according to (sometimes important) details, but the overall picture concerning the operation of the program remains remarkably consistent.

Ideational History of the RPF

Five (often overlapping) activities of social control seem universal in all of the RPF information that is available from non-Scientology sources. These activities are: (1) forcible confinement, (2) physical maltreatment (through such things as hard exercise, physically demanding chores, poor diet, limited time for hygiene, and inadequate sleeping arrangements, etc.); (3) social maltreatment (through restrictions in verbal and written communication with others, degradation, very low pay, etc.); (4) intensive study of ideology, and (5) forced confessions of past alleged 'sins.' The goal of these activities is the alignment of the RPF inmates with the ideology of Scientology as directed by its leaders. This alignment comes about after the program has eliminated people's abilities or desires to criticize policies or the leaders who oversee their implementation. Remarkably, a 1955 booklet that Hubbard himself almost certainly wrote described psychopolitical techniques of subduing people and populations to totalitarian rule, and some of the techniques foreshadow the RPF policies that subsequently he approved for use against his own elite corps.

Hubbard's Brainwashing and Psychopolitics Manual

The booklet was entitled, Brain-Washing--A Synthesis of the Russian Textbook on Psychopolitics, and one version was "published as a public service by the Church of Scientology" ([Hubbard?, 1955: back cover). The introduction purports to be a speech by the famous chief of the Soviet secret police, Lavrenti Beria, to "American students at the Lenin University" about how to subvert societies through the imposition of "psychopolitics"

on populations through the guise of "mental healing" (Hubbard [probable author], 1955: 3). The entire text is fraudulent (Kominsky, 1970), and all indicators point directly to Hubbard as the author. In any case, Hubbard wrote about the "brainwashing" booklet to his followers (Hubbard, 1955a: 309-310; 1955b: 312-313; 1956: 328), claiming that "unless the basic philosophy of the brainwasher is understood," auditors will have difficulty handling clients who had suffered the techniques (Hubbard, 1955a: 309). More probably he was trying to both discredit psychiatry and endear his organization to the American government (with the claim that Dianetics and Scientology could reverse the effects of Communist brainwashing and thus was a powerful political tool). Certainly Hubbard's desire to secure Dianetics and Scientology as a weapon against Communism would explain why he wrote the FBI about the booklet in mid-December, 1955. It also would explain why The Church of Scientology published the slim volume "as a public service" (back cover of Hubbard [probable author], 1955).

Obsessed with issues of controlling and subduing people and nations, the "brainwashing" manual is an extraordinary work. Most probably, key ideas that Hubbard (presumably) wrote about in the brainwashing manual became policies and procedures in the RPF nearly twenty years later. The manual's own definition of psychopolitics, for example, indicated that it was "the art and science of asserting and maintaining dominion over the thoughts and loyalties of individuals, officers, bureaux, and masses, and the effecting of the conquest of enemy nations through 'mental healing'" (Hubbard [probable author], 1955: 6). Later the text presented a strategy for subversives to use in destroying individuals' opposition to the state, and this strategy involved the destruction of any forms of individuality that might foster doubts against the imposing ideology:

[t]he tenets of rugged individualism, personal determinism, self-will, imagination, and personal creativeness are alike in the masses antipathetic to the good of the Greater State. These wilful and unaligned forces are no more than illnesses which will bring about disaffection, disunity, and at length the collapse of the group to which the individual is attached (Hubbard [probable author], 1955: 9).

Having identified individuality as a threat to "the Greater State," the solution was simple:

It is the mission of Psychopolitics first to align the obedience and goals of the group, and then maintain their alignment by the eradication of the effectiveness of the persons and personalities which might serve the group toward disaffection.... Psychopolitics makes it possible to remove that part of his personality which, by itself, is making havoc with the person's own constitution, as well as with the group with which the person is connected (Hubbard [probable author], 1955: 10).

In essence, the State had to establish its own goals as the only acceptable ones, then destroy aspects of people's personalities that might lead them to individualistic expressions that would be out of alignment with those goals. This outline for totalitarian conformity transformed into the reality of the RPF.

Hubbard's Discussions of Brainwashing in the Late 1960s

During the late 1960s, Hubbard discussed brainwashing at least four times in various talks and writings, and these discussions always were consistent with the basic techniques of personality destruction and goals-realignment discussed in the "brainwashing" manual of 1955. The book, *All About Radiation*, bridges the 1960s and the 1950s, since Hubbard took his comments from a 1957 "Congress on Nuclear Radiation and Health," published them that same year, then reissued the book in 1967. This publication included a section entitled "What Brainwashing Is":

Brainwashing is a very simple mechanism. One gets a person to agree that something might be a certain way and then drives him by introverting him and through self-criticism to the possibility that it is that way. Only then does a man believe that the erroneous fact was a truth. By gradient scale of hammering, pounding and torture, brainwashers are able to make people believe that that these people [i.e., the victims] saw and did things which they never did do (Hubbard, 1957: 84; also quoted in Hubbard, 1976b: 55).

As he had indicated in 1955, people could be brainwashed (he believed) by giving them an external goal or fact, then breaking them down (through stress) until they believed it.

Two years after the reissue of *All About Radiation* (on December 20, 1969), Hubbard discussed brainwashing again, but added a twist. Now he defined it as the "subjection of a person to systematic indoctrination or mental pressure with a view to

getting him to change his views or to confess to a crime" (quoted in Hubbard, 1976b: 55). Not only, therefore, did Hubbard believe that he knew how to force people to change their minds on vital issues, but also he thought that he could force (presumably false) confessions out of people by "brainwashing" them through severe stress. Again these insights bore fruit in the RPF environment.

Additional glimpses into Hubbard's knowledge about brainwashing comes from a March, 1969 Scientology article in the organization's Freedom newspaper. At the time of initial publication, the article entitled "Brainwashing" did not reveal its author, and only after 1992 were researchers able to verify that it came from Hubbard himself (see Church of Scientology International, 1992: 757). The article contained a long excerpt from a politically conservative writer, Robert G. Ridgway (followed at the end by Hubbard's comments), and one section of Ridgway's commentary contained a section subtitled "Nervous Breakdown." It described techniques designed to break down individuals and then build them up into the externally defined goals of the group:

'The first part in the technique of brainwashing is an artificially induced nervous breakdown, which breaks the line with the individual's past experience and casts him adrift in a sea of suggestibility. This is brought on by exhaustion, confusion, continuous physical pain, and fear and anxiety. This destroys human individuality and identity by fracturing fixed habit patterns and employing the useful fragments, cemented by suggestion, to rebuild an entirely different personality. Memory is diffused. Logic is confused, and judgement is distorted in the absence of reference and discipline. The person has lost control of his mind--it is then that suggestion is most effective. The victim is grateful to be oriented again. He appreciates any purpose or direction given to him. He feels he has been led back to sanity, [but] in reality his soul has been stolen. This was done to American fathers in Korea and their sons in Vietnam' (Ridgway, quoted in Hubbard], 1969: [4]).

Similar to Hubbard's writing in the previous decade, this article identified the necessity of destroying individuality (accomplished here through inducing nervous breakdowns) and then aligning the shattered personality with officially provided purpose and direction.

Hubbard (we presume) had made a similar argument about breaking down people in the brainwashing manual of 1955. The manual stated that:

There is a curve of degradation which leads downward to a point where the endurance of an individual is almost at an end, and any sudden action toward him will place him in a state of shock. Similarly, a soldier held prisoner can be abused, denied, defamed, and degraded until the slightest motion on the part of his captors will cause him to flinch. Similarly, the slightest word on the part of his captors will cause him to obey, or vary his loyalties and beliefs. Given sufficient degradation, a prisoner can be caused to murder his fellow countrymen in the same stockade.

Experiments on German prisoners have lately demonstrated that only after seventy days of filthy food, little sleep, and nearly untenable quarters, that [sic] the least motion toward the prisoner would bring about a state of shock beyond his endurance threshold, and would cause him to hypnotically receive anything said to him. Thus, it is possible, in an entire stockade of prisoners, to the number of thousands, to bring about a state of complete servile obedience, and without the labour of personally addressing each one, to pervert their loyalties, and implant in them adequate commands to insure their future conduct, even when released to their own people (Hubbard [probable author]: 1955: 41-42).

Again, techniques involving attempted attitude changes through severe stress became reality in the RPF, which Hubbard created less than five years after publishing an article on brainwashing that contained Ridgway's comments about nervous breakdowns.

Organizational Forerunners to the RPF

During the very period when Hubbard wrote about brainwashing in the late 1960s, he also established a number of formal structures within Scientology designed to both punish perceived deviants whose job performances were deficient and train people for necessary jobs that the organization needed. Having been at sea from late 1967 (Atack, 1990: 176-177), Hubbard's punishment and training programs reflected the needs and conditions of maritime life. On January 4, 1968, for example, Hubbard created what he called the "Mud Box Brigade," which was a punishment assignment to any Sea Org member whom Hubbard determined was "a freeloader who is loafing on post and drifting with the wind" (quoted in Hubbard, 1976b: 341). The unsavory jobs involved

cleaning the area where the ship's anchors dragged in mud (the mud boxes), along with "fuel lines, water lines, bilges, etc." (quoted in Hubbard, 1976b: 341). These were difficult, dirty, and somewhat dangerous assignments, but within a few years they would be taken over by inmates in the RPF's internal punishment program, the RPF's RPF.

Certainly by early 1969, Hubbard had in place two training projects--the Deck Project Force (DPF) and the Pursers Project Force (PPF), but he abolished them on March 25, 1969 (Hubbard, 1969). Apparently the DPF had trained Sea Org members on various ship duties, and the PPF presumably trained people in areas of ship finance and supply (see Hubbard, 1976b: 429). Likewise, some time before early April, 1972, Hubbard had a training program for household services called the Stewards Project Force (SPF [Hubbard, 1972a; 1976b: 501]). He also had a program called the Estates Project Force (EPF), which (as we must reconstruct from a later document), did such work as painting and sweeping (Hubbard, 1977: 1). Until the advent of the RPF, the EPF also received Sea Org members for (what Scientology called) "retreading." These staff needed constant supervision, were making obvious problems, or were performing their jobs without enthusiasm (i.e., were suffering from "robotism" [Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 1]).

Apparently, however, Hubbard reinstated the DPF, because by early 1972 it had a function beyond mere training. In addition to new recruits, the DPF received Sea Org members who were questioning authority. In the peculiar logic and language of Scientology, these people had "interiorized." That is to say, "the person is finding counter-intention in the environment which coincides with his own (this is reasonableness), and his attention becomes directed to his own counter-intention rather than to his objective" (Hubbard, 1976b: 437, quoting a Flag Order from September 23, 1969 [emphasis in original]). Said plainly, these people were questioning aspects of Sea Org life, and were finding things in the external world to reinforce their internal doubts. Consequently, the DPF was "to rehabilitate and exteriorize their attention" by getting them to do work assignments (Hubbard, 1972a; see 1976b: 133). Again said plainly, the intent of the program was to get a person to stop looking inward and (re)learn to accept the orders that the organization and its leaders demanded.

With this goal in mind, Hubbard imposed a system of rewards and punishments called "ethics" on people within the DPF that paralleled the system under which ordinary Sea Org members

operated. Overseeing DPF ethics was a person who had the title, the "Deck Project Force Master-At-Arms [DPF MAA]," and he or she was responsible for making "ethics real to DPF members by removing counter-intention and other-intention from the area, and by getting each DPF member to crank out products with an honest uptrending statistic" (Hubbard, 1976b: 133; quoting a Flag Order from February 20, 1972). In other words, the MAA was to remove any ideas that were out of alignment with Scientology's goals through the use of the reward-and-punishment "ethics" system. Lateness, poor work performance, negative attitude, etc., were "out-ethics" actions that warranted the MAA to assign the offender to a lower ethics condition, which involved penalties on a gradient scale of severity. The offender had to work off these hours-long penalties or "amends" after the normal eight-to-ten hour work day (see Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1973). Supposedly the completion of these amends taught people about the consequences of not showing continual increases in the output of their jobs, which supposedly was due to personal intentions that allegedly were out of harmony with Scientology's demands. In the DPF MAA's ethics assignments we can hear the echo of Hubbard's ideas about brainwashing, which he first discussed in 1955 and elaborated upon in the late 1960s. This staff member was to physically wear down people when trying to get them to renounce their private doubts, with the goal of getting them to completely embrace the collective goals of the organization.

Apparently the DPF's regime of hard work in harsh conditions continued into the early 1980s, since the account of Birgitta Dagnell about her time on the DPF in Denmark bears remarkable similarities to RPF accounts. According to her own statement, she was among the eighty-two former Guardian Office members sent into the Danish DPF by the new leadership of the Office of Special Affairs in 1982. The crowded conditions, the poor food, the exhausting hours, the assignments involving "cleaning toilets, corridors[,] and hotel rooms[,] or some painting and construction work" (Dagnell, 1997: 3) were the same for RPF inmates in other parts of the world. So were the "gang-bang sec checks" (which I discuss later) and the demand the "we 'recognized' that we really [were] that bad and evil" (Dagnell, 1997: 4), which she experienced during what she thought were going to be auditing sessions.

The Creation of the RPF

The RPF built directly upon the punitive, some might say, "brainwashing" role that the DPF had developed. Hubbard's motivations for establishing the program in January, 1974 included personal retaliation. Having gone ashore in late 1973 to ride his motorcycle on Tenerife in the Canary Islands, Hubbard took a spill and was injured. Recovering on board his flagship, Hubbard blamed the accident on unnamed crew members whom he believed were not carrying out his orders with sufficient diligence. In response, he ordered the creation of the RPF, with the intention of assigning to it anyone who had a "'counter-intention' to his orders or wishes..., along with all trouble-makers and back-sliders" (Miller, 1987: 321; see Kent interview with Pignotti, 1997: 6; Kent interview with Ernesto, 1997: 2).

Researchers do not have copies of the first three Flag Orders establishing the RPF, but do have the fourth one, which is a May 30, 1977 twice-revised version of a January 7, 1974 issue. Some time between its inception and late May, 1977, the RPF had assumed the punitive functions previously handled by the EPF and, presumably, the DPF. Sea Org members entered the RPF if they had dramatic indicator reads (called "rock-slams") while being counseled or "audited" on Scientology's confessional and lie detector machine called the e-meter (which gives readings about galvanic skin responses). Such indicator- or needle-jumps supposedly indicated "a hidden evil intention on the subject or question under discussion or auditing" (Hubbard, 1975: 357). Others received RPF assignments for poor production on their jobs or posts, poor personality indicators (presumably such as depression, grumbling, and doubting Hubbard or his techniques), and obvious trouble making (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 1).

In considerable detail the RPF document laid out the framework of forcible confinement, physical and social maltreatment, intensive reindoctrination, and forced confessions that were (and are) central to the program's operation. Certain passages, for example, outlined the basic rules about forcible confinement. Inmates could not leave the facility, and could travel between buildings only when they were accompanied by security guards (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 10). Physical maltreatment occurred within the confines of sometimes demanding and dangerous work to which they were assigned. Specifically inmates had to carry out eleven maintenance functions--interior and exterior building cleaning;

bathroom cleaning; general painting; internal building renovations; storage, passageway, and stairway cleaning; other "large scale" projects outside of sleeping, kitchen, or eating areas; "garage cleaning"; "elevator and elevator shaft cleaning"; engine room and boiler room cleaning; furniture set-ups for events; and "garbage disposal." They also could receive special assignments from specific Scientology personnel (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 3). They were supposed to get seven hours sleep (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 4), and they were allowed to call on a Scientology Medical Officer (who need not be a medical doctor) only if they were running a temperature or suffer an injury that requires medication or treatment (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 6). Inmates were allowed to eat normal meals unless doing so deprived Sea Org members who were not RPFers (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 9). Their use of bathrooms and showers was restricted (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 11), and, at RPF expense, inmates were allowed "[a] minimum number of circulating fans" in their study and sleeping areas "where there is NO other circulation of air easily available" (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 11 [emphasis and capitals in original]). By adding together the time allotments that inmates had to perform various duties, we can deduce that each day people were supposed to receive seven hours sleep, study and audit for five hours, take one-half hour for each of three meals, spend thirty minutes a day on hygiene, and perform physical work for ten hours.

Policies involving social maltreatment were numerous. Inmates had to wear black or dark blue boilersuits (i.e, a type of heavy workclothes [Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 1]). They were barred from all normal social activities in the facility or the community (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 2-3, 11), and any problems that this restriction might cause regarding non-Scientology commitments required an immediate report to superiors (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 3). As the policy succinctly stated, "[a] member of the RPF is a member of the RPF and of nothing outside of it, till released" (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 3). Depending upon inmates' stage of progress, pay was either one-quarter or one-half the normal Sea Org rates, "unless withheld or fined by a justice action" (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 9; see 9 and 10). Inmates' sleeping quarters were isolated from those of other Sea Org members, and were supposed to conform to fire, health, and safety regulations

(Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 10). Inmates could not speak to regular Sea Org members, public Scientologists, or members of the public unless they had to in order to avoid "impoliteness" (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 10). A spouse could have a conjugal visit with his or her partner one night a week in an authorized area provided that the person's RPF progress was satisfactory (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 10). Likewise, spouses could visit with their partners or school-age children once daily during meals or at night if their progress was satisfactory and they refrained from discussing their RPF situations. Additional meal visits with pre-school children could be arranged (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 10).

Intensive study of Hubbard's ideology was built into the program, with inmates allotted "5 hours study or auditing" daily (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1977: 4, see 6). Some evidence indicates that RPF inmates in the mid-1970s could complete the program in several months, but later accounts indicate that people frequently took over a year, and served RPF sentences more than once during their Scientology careers.

The Creation of the RPF's RPF

On April 24, 1974, a Flag Conditions Order established the RPF's RPF. This program received people who were on the RPF but not progressing satisfactorily, or who thought that their assignment to the RPF was humorous. As Hubbard reported in his "management technology" dictionary:

[t]he first RPF's RPF assignment was made because the person considered their [sic] RPF assignment amusing, an award [sic] and was therefore unable to recognize a need for redemption or any means to effect it. Until such time as the person recognized this need and of their [sic] own self-determinism requested to be included in the RPF redemption actions, the [RPF's RPF] restrictions applied" (Hubbard, 1975: 451 [emphasis in original]).

People on the RPF's RPF were segregated from the RPF inmates in their work assignments, eating, sleeping, roll-call, and other activities. They were not paid, did not receive auditing, were not to receive more than six hours sleep, and received triple ethics penalties for offenses. Reflecting the fact that the PF's

RPF began on a ship, inmates in the program were allowed to work only "on mud boxes in the E/R [engine room]." Moreover, they were allowed to communicate only with the person in charge of the RPF, and could "not join RPF fully until acceptable amends [were] made to all RPF members" (Hubbard, 1975: 451 [emphasis in original]).

Remarkably, this summary of the RPF's RPF is available in a Scientology dictionary to which members of the public have easy access. Not surprisingly, however, this same information does not appear in Scientology's latest dissemination effort--its World Wide Web page. Sponsored by the Church of Scientology International, it makes no mention of the RPF's RPF and describes the RPF in terms that make it sound like a program of confidence-building and personal reinvigoration. According to the webpage, the RPF is "a second chance" for "Sea Org staff members who would otherwise be subject to dismissal for serious and/or continuous ecclesiastical violations"--an opportunity to experience "complete rehabilitation" or "personnel 'burn out'" (Church of Scientology International, 1996). "Participants" in the program receive "both study and religious counseling on a daily basis to address areas of difficulty in their personal lives." They also "work eight hours a day as a team on tasks which improve the facilities of the Church by which they are

employed and improve teamwork and coordination among the participants. The work allows the individual to regain confidence in himself [sic] and the pride of accomplishment." Sea Org members who have gone through the program supposedly "attest to its enormous personal benefit, and express their appreciation for being able to avail themselves of redemption as opposed to dismissal" (Church of Scientology International, 1996). This public relations portrayal of the RPF stands in dramatic contrast to accounts about it that many former "participants" provide after they are no longer under the direct control of Scientology's policies that punish persons who criticize the organization or its doctrines. Each of the topics that the webpage mentions in a favorable light--study, religious counseling/auditing, 'eight hour' work days that rebuild confidence and pride, employment conditions and pay, and graduates' expressions of appreciation--receive very different interpretations by the former Sea Org members who provided the information for my RPF study.

RPF Consistencies and Variations

While the RPF stories that former members recount show remarkable consistencies over time and distance, variations occur with respect to facilities, personnel, and immediate organizational demands. Virtually all of the accounts, however, illustrate how the RPF attempted to control the bodies of its inmates through a variety of physical demands, abuses, and work obligations while at the same time it attempted to control their minds through extensive auditing, coursework, confessions, and success stories.

Assembling the affidavits, interviews, internet postings, and correspondence that I have collected, I have: two RPF accounts from the Apollo (the ship on which Hubbard lived from 1967 to 1975); seven from the Fort Harrison Hotel complex in Clearwater, Florida; one from La Quinta, California; one from Indio, California; four from Gilman Hot Springs, California (which informants sometimes called either "Hemet" after the nearby town or "Gold" according to the Scientology name); two from the Happy Valley camp near Gilman Hot Springs and the Soboba Indian Reserve; two from the Cedars complex in Los Angeles; one from an unnamed ship docked near Los Angeles; one from East Grinstead, Sussex (England); and one from an RPF forerunner in Copenhagen, Denmark. Five informants went through the RPF's RPF--one on the Apollo; two in the Fort Harrison complex; and two in either Gilman Hots Springs or Happy Valley.

1. Forcible Confinement

Forcible confinement, which is one of the prerequisites for social scientists utilizing the brainwashing term, specifically occurred in nine RPF accounts and two RPF's RPF accounts. Indeed, seven informants had stories about their (sometimes successful) escape attempts from the program and the guards assigned to prevent them from doing so. These accounts stand in stark contrast to Scientology's insistence that "participation" in an RPF program is voluntary. For example, Dennis Erlich's experience in the RPF and the RPF's RPF at the Fort Harrison in late 1978 began with two "guards" arriving to escort him to the program. He did not resist them because "it was sort of implicit that [if] you wanna [sic] fight you're gonna [sic] get the shit kicked out of you..." (Kent Interview with Erlich, 1997: 9). On the other side of the continent at roughly the same period, Patti had "two big burly men" show up and say, "'you're going on the RPF...'" (Kent Interview with Patti, 1997: 19). Former member David Mayo told a more dramatic story in his affidavit, insisting that "[o]n August 29, 1982, David Miscavige, and others, acting on the orders of L. Ron Hubbard, kidnapped me and subsequently kept me captive and physically and mentally abused me for six months" (Mayo, 1994: 2-3).

Other people spoke about either being forcibly confined themselves (for example, Whitfield, 1989: 6) or seeing others who were. Former member-turned-critic, Dennis Erlich, joked about his RPF assignment, and, in accordance with Hubbard's policy, wound up in the RPF's RPF in Fort Harrison's basement. Guarded down there for ten days, Erlich states that he spent the first day or two "locked in a wired cage..." (Kent Interview with Erlich, 1997: 8). When Nefertiti (which is the presumed former member's alias) found herself in the RPF's RPF in the same basement a decade or so later, she met a woman (she claims) who was "in her thirties, feverish, [her] entire body poured with sweat [and] was wearing chains. She had a chain about twenty inches long linking her two ankles so she had to do small hasty steps" (Nefertiti, 1997: 3). Tonya Burden swore, "under pains and penalties of perjury" (Burden, 1980: 12) that she "personally observed a person chained to pipes in the boiler room in the Fort Harrison building for a period of weeks" (Burden, 1980: 10). Likewise, in an affidavit, Hana Whitfield swore that, while she was on the RPF in the Fort Harrison, Lyn Froyland was assigned to the RPF's RPF and "was chained to a pipe down there [in the basement] for weeks, under guard. She was taken meals and allowed toilet breaks, but no other hygiene" (Whitfield, 1994: 42).

The most extensive account of confinement comes from former member Andre Tabayoyon, who spoke about the Gilman Hot Springs base (on which RPF members worked) having a security system that included "the perimeter fence, the ultra razor barriers, the lighting of the perimeter fence, electronic monitors, the concealed microphones, the ground sensors, the motion sensors and hidden cameras which were installed all over the area--even outside the base" (Tabayoyon, 1994: 8). Tabayoyon spoke about working on the base's security system in 1991, but back in January, 1983, unwilling RPF victim Julie Mayo found her freedom blocked by a guarded fence at Gilman Hot Springs. Taking what may have been the only escape option she had, Julie Mayo waited one morning until the guard opened the gate to allow someone to walk across the street for breakfast, and slipped out to the road, unnoticed, before it closed (J. Mayo, 1996: 8-9).

Other escape stories indicate that RPF victims were, essentially, imprisoned in situations where they had not given consent (much less informed consent) for their captors to hold them. Vicki Azanaran, for example, "and two other victims escaped from Happy Valley onto the Sobo[b]a Indian Reservation where they were pursued on motorcycles by guards of Happy Valley. Vicki and the other victims were rescued by residents of the reservation who picked them up in a pick-up truck and spirited them to a motel in the City of Hemet" (Azanaran and Azanaran, 1988: 12). Former member Pat escaped by using several elaborate ruses.

First, she concocted a story that convinced guards to allow her to use the telephone. Then she called a non-Scientology friend and gave explicit instructions about where her friend should be the next night (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997b: 3). The next night, she concocted a second story that managed to get her near to the street where her friend was waiting. Manipulating the guard who was with her, Pat managed to get enough distance from him so that she got inside the car:

slammed the door shut and said, 'Go!.' [My friend] hit the door locks and [the friend] stepped on the gas.... It was an awful, awful time, and there I was in this car not knowing where I was going, forty cents in my purse.... But I couldn't be there anymore; I couldn't be there another minute. I couldn't handle another second of the degradation (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997b: 4). As the car roared away, Scientologists who witnessed her escape screamed at her.

Other escape accounts exist, all of them indicating that people were in the RPF program against their wills. Nevertheless, some people allowed themselves to be talked back into the program (or into a related program) by Scientology retrieval teams sent out to bring them back. As Anne Rosenblum recounted, for example, she escaped the RPF from the Fort Harrison in Clearwater by slipping out of sick bay and jumping over a wall (Rosenblum, n.d.: 6). She fled to the house of a Scientology friend who, apparently, informed the organization, and (along with four Scientology escorts') convinced her to return and route out of the Sea Org through standard Scientology procedures. In a confused emotional state, she returned to the Fort Harrison and remained under guard as she went through a number of Scientology hearings in preparation for the organization releasing her. Hubbard happened to offer a general amnesty to RPFers at this moment, and she and several others accepted the offer. She indicated that the organization ran her through security checks concerning whether we were taking any Scientology data with us, what our intentions were when we left etc. Scientologists searched her luggage for any items that she might have been trying to remove, then had her sign an affidavit that listed all of her alleged crimes of this lifetime, which the organization culled from her supposedly confidential auditing files (Rosenblum, n.d.: 7).

Robert Vaughn Young informed me that he: escaped down the river bed one night. Planned it for a long time. Got into Hemet and they [i.e., members of Scientology retrieval team] found me there at a motel. And this is where you get into the power of the organization--and without anyone laying a hand on me, I was convinced to go back to the RPF (Kent Interview with Young, 1994: 22).

On a second escape attempt, however, he was not so lucky he got caught (Kent Interview with Young, 1994: 22). Apparently Hana Whitfield also escaped the RPF (in Clearwater), but she, too, re-entered after pressure from Scientologists who found her (Whitfield, 1989: 7).

Current Scientology opponent Lawrence (Larry) Wollersheim also was caught trying to escape from the RPF operating on a ship (presumably in the Los Angeles area) in 1974. As a court decision in his favour determined:

[u]ltimately, Wollersheim felt he could bear the [RPF] regime no longer. He attempted to escape from the ship because as he testified later: 'I was dying and losing my mind.' But his

escape effort was discovered. Several Scientology members seized Wollersheim and held him captive. They released him only when he agreed to remain and continue with the auditing and other 'religious practices' taking place on the vessel (California Court of Appeal, 1989: 9274).

The court used this example as evidence that Wollersheim accepted some of his auditing under threat of physical coercion (California Court of Appeal, 1989: 9274). While it would be unwise to generalize from these accounts and suggest that all inmates in RPF programs were in them involuntarily, certainly some of them had not consented or chosen to be there.

2. Accounts of Physical Maltreatment

Undoubtedly the physical maltreatment that many people experienced in various RPF programs was a factor in their desire to escape. I hesitate to say that all people experienced physical maltreatment, since one informant who went through the RPF at the Fort Harrison Hotel said that the daily schedule was not bothersome and that he got enough sleep (Kent Interview with Ernesto, 1997: 16, 17). He admitted, however, that he was not assigned the heavy physical work, but only cleaned and emptied garbage (Kent Interview with Ernesto, 1997: 16). Other people, however, experienced a wide range of (what they considered to be) physical abuses.

A. Excessive Exercise--The Running Program

Forced running was a universal aspect in the RPF, but leaders also used it as a specific punishment. According to a person who was on the Apollo, Hubbard devised the running program as a punishment against a member whom he thought needed some discipline. He ordered the member to do fifty laps around the prom[enade] deck. [The member] did about twenty and declared [that] he had done fifty. I remember distinctly, and he got away with it (Kent Interview with Ernesto, 1997: 5). With the advent of the RPF, running quickly became a standard punishment.

The location of the running punishment, of course, varied according to the location of the RPF program. Monica Pignotti, who was in the RPF on the Apollo, wrote a particularly clear description of the running punishment that she experienced in the early months of 1975:

We had to scrub down the entire bathroom, including all the bulkheads (walls) and ceilings. After we cleaned an area, it had

to pass a white glove inspection. If the glove came up dirty, the person who cleaned the area had to run laps from bow to stern of the ship (about 1/5 of a mile each). One time, when my senior wasn't satisfied with the way I cleaned a bathroom, she ordered me to 'take a lap.' I protested because I thought she was being unfair and her reply was, 'Don't Q&A with me. Take two laps.' I objected again and she said, 'Take four laps.' This went on until I was up to about 10 laps, which I eventually had to do (Pignotti, 1989: 23).

Using the technical language of Scientology, Pignotti had been put on rocks and shoals penalties for Sea Org members (Hubbard, 1976b: 449).

From her Fort Harrison RPF experience, Anne Rosenblum indicated that the rocks and shoals punishments often included sit-ups and push-ups in addition to running laps up and down the garage ramp (Rosenblum, n. d.: 2). Dennis Erlich also reported having to run up and down the parking structure... (Kent Interview with Erlich, 1997: 16). In the Cedars complex in Los Angeles, rocks and shoals involved running the stairwells or taking laps around the entire complex (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997: 27). The most difficult running punishments apparently took place at either the Gilman Hot Springs or Happy Valley RPF programs, where formerly high ranking Sea Org members had to run around either a tree or a pole for twelve hours a day. Julie Mayo indicated that she was put on a running program for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and made to run around a tree in all types of extreme desert conditions (J. Mayo, 1996: 7). Her husband, David, reported that he was forced to run around a tree in the desert in temperatures of up to 110 degrees for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week for 3 months... (D. Mayo, 1994: 3). Vicki Aznaran made a similar claim about having to run around an orange telephone pole from 7:00 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. in the evening, with 10 minute rests every one-half hour, and 30 minute breaks for lunch and dinner (Aznaran and Aznaran, 1988: 9).

B. Physically Demanding and Tiring Chores

Labour was a central aspect to RPF programs, usually involving maintenance and renovation. On the Apollo, RPF inmates performed a number of cleaning jobs scraping and painting; scrubbing decks; etc. (Kent Interview with Dale, 1997: 6). While on the RPF's RPF, Monica Pignotti was made to go down and clean muck from the bilges. That was my job all day long... [A]nd I had to clean all this sludge out and then paint paint it... I was on it for five days... (Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997:26).

While an account from the RPF in East Grinstead spoke about chipping the crust off cooker parts or painting stones (Forde, n. d.: 3), activities such as garbage disposal (Royal Courts of Justice, 1984: 27), and cleaning bathrooms (Pignotti, 1989: 23; Rosenblum, n. d.: 1), hallways (Rosenblum, n. d.: 1) and stairways (Nefertiti, 1997: 10) was much more common. Vicki Aznaran reportedly dug ditches (Aznaran and Aznaran, 1988: 11), and Pignotti was part of an RPF team that did photo shoots for pictures that appeared in the 1978 publication, *What is Scientology?* (Church of Scientology of California, 1978). Gerry Armstrong assembled course packs (Superior Court of the State of California, 1984: 1462), but he also performed another common RPF assignment building renovation.

In the period around April, 1979, Armstrong worked on a team that was renovating a house that was to be the dwelling of L. Ron Hubbard (Superior Court of the State of California, 1984: 1475). Andre Tabayoyon (1994: 24 [section # 116-117, 120-122]) spoke about RPF slave labor (as he called it) building and renovating numerous dwellings and buildings used by Scientology leaders and their movie star friends. The most dramatic renovation accounts came from Pat, whose RPF team (she stated) was involved in major building renovations in southern California in the 1970s:

the pressure kept mounting every day with the renovations. Every day that passed there was greater pressure to get renovations done... until it got to the point that we were and I swear to God this is true we worked thirty hours on, three hours off. We worked shifts of thirty hours at a time.

....

[W]e would work so many hours, Steve, that I, I remember [that] I would pass people and I and we'd be in a dark room with a screw gun laying drywall in a completely dark room and I would pass and I would stop because I saw sparks flying off this thing and I'd go, 'hey, what's going on?,' and the person would just look at me with this dazed look saying, 'Oh, I, I don't know. I'm just looking at the sparks.' I mean, we were delusional we were so tired. I remember trying to construct a sentence and being unable to do so. You know, saying knowing that I had to say, 'I need that screw driver,' and saying, 'I need that fence for the sandwich that isn't purple.' [...] I was unable to be at all coherent (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997: 25, 26).

Pat's thirty hour work shifts were unusual Robert Vaughn Young spoke about twelve hour work days (Kent Interview with Young, 1994: 18)--but Monica Pignotti reported that once she had to work for thirty-six hours straight with no sleep because Hubbard had ordered the whole ship to be cleaned (Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997: 14).

C. Poor Diet

The heavy workload should have warranted a high calorie diet, but several of the former RPF inmates complained about the quality of the food. Despite what Tonya Burden identified as an 18 hour workday, she indicated that often she received only rice and beans' and water for her meals (Burden, 1980: 10). Apparently Nefertiti ate what she called soups or pigswills, only occasionally flavoured with milk (Nefertiti, 1997: 9). Pat complained that we were fed really dreadful food, which she went on to clarify as very institutional, very poorly prepared, and which included scraps and what was left over (Kent Interview with Patti, 1997a: 24). Pignotti reported the common refrain that her RPF cohort ate after the rest of the staff was finished, but the leftovers that they ate came from the kitchen and not items found on people's plates (Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997: 14; see Kent Interview with Dale, 1997: 6). Poor diet may have been a contributing factor to Larry Wollersheim loss of fifteen pounds during his six weeks on the RPF aboard a ship (California Court of Appeal, 1989: 9269).

D. Issues of Hygiene and Medical Care

Worn down by a rigorous work schedule, and possibly weakened further by marginal diets, RPF members were especially susceptible to illness. On the Apollo, RPF members apparently had trouble keeping their clothes dry (Kent Interview with Dale, 1997:6). On land, many RPF victims probably had a similar problem, but now the dampness was the result of perspiration from wearing work clothes in hot climates. Hana Whitfield, for example, complained about having to wear heavy jumpsuits or boilersuits in the hot Florida weather (Whitfield, 1989: 5-6). Despite the obvious need for baths or showers, Whitfield revealed that [w]e were not allowed to shower longer than 30 seconds (Whitfield, 1989: 6). While in the RPF, Nefertiti saw firsthand the problems that excessive sweating could cause women, and she included a pertinent story in her recollection of her forcible confinement experience:

We all suffered from heavy sweating. I recall this young woman suffering from an important [sic] infection which had been developing under her breasts. Instead of healing, the wound had been expanding to such a degree that purulent blisters had reached her navel (Nefertiti, 1997: 9).

Nefertiti was not the only former member to report having seen a woman on the RPF with a severe skin problem former member Lori Taverna told city officials in Clearwater, Florida that she saw a few people who looked very sick[, including o]ne [who] had sores all over her body, open sores (City of Clearwater Commission Hearings, 1982: 2-151). Another medical and hygienic problem that women faced was not having enough cash to buy a box of Tampax [tampons] (Nefertiti, 1997: 11).

People faced health problems in a variety of areas. David Mayo, for example, claimed that I was refused medical and dental treatment while on the RPF, and after escaping captivity I lost six teeth and required thousands of dollars of dental work to save the rest of my teeth (Mayo, 1994: 3). Most seriously, Andre Tabayoyon recalled working on dangerous machinery while on the RPF's RPF and seeing a distressed co-worker thrust his finger into the machine which cut his finger off (Tabayoyon, 1994: 10).

E. Sleeping Conditions

Beyond these real and immediate issues related to hygiene and medical care, many people spoke about issues related to sleep. They complained (in retrospect) about their sleeping conditions the conditions of the mattresses; ventilation in the rooms; crowded conditions; and inappropriate sleeping areas. From different times and different locations, people spoke about the deplorable condition of the mattresses on which they had to sleep. Remembering the circumstances for sleeping on the Apollo, Dale recounted that we were given mattresses but the mattresses we were given were old, filthy mattresses that... had to be cleaned up.... A lot of them smelled... (Kent Interview with Dale, 1997: 6). Reflecting on her period of grueling work shifts, Pat recalled that when our thirty hours were up we'd get to sleep. We would go to the roof of one of the buildings where it was cold and there were these damp, disgusting mattresses that we would just fall onto and sleep (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997a:26).

Mattresses frequently rested either on the ground or the floor. When, for example, Robert Vaughn Young was in isolation in a converted chicken coop on the Gilman Hot Springs property, he indicated that there were some old mattresses that g[o]t thrown down on the floor. You know, you talk about a crash pad... (Kent Interview with Young, 1994: 20; see A. Tabayoyon, 1994: 9 [para. # 35]). Adelle Hartwell was at one of the Indio facilities at the same time that her daughter was there in the RPF. Someone in charge of the RPF (presumably) put the mattresses of the RPF people outside, and around the same time the daughter fell ill. During the heat of the day I would see her moving her mattress from one shady spot to another to try and keep out of the blazing sun and 115 degree heat. I have never seen illness treated this way (Hartwell, n.d.: 3). Like the sick daughter, Vicki Aznaran may have meant that her mattress was not on a frame when she stated that she and others were made to sleep on the ground (Aznaran and Aznaran, 1988: 11). Certainly accounts from the Fort Harrison RPF indicated that people slept on mattresses strewn on the floor, usually in cramped, poorly ventilated rooms (Armstrong, 1982: 3; Nefertiti, 1997: 12; Rosenblum, n. d.: 3; Whitfield, 1989: 5). Ventilation was so bad the first time that Monica Pignotti was on the Apollo's RPF that we slept out on the decks on towels because it was so stuffy down there [in the RPF] and it was really horrendous conditions... (Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997: 18).

Even when RPF members had beds or bunks, significant problems remained. While in an RPF program on a ship, Wollersheim and others were forced to sleep in the ship's hold. A total of thirty people were stacked nine high in the hold without proper ventilation (California Court of Appeal, 1989: 9274). At the Fort Harrison, Dennis Erlich and other RPF inmates slept in bunks on the third floor of the outdoor parking structure that adjoins the hotel, so they inhaled exhaust fumes from cars (Kent Interview with Erlich, 1997: 3). Apparently the women's sleeping facilities were nearby, because Anne Rosenblum wrote that:

[i]n December, 1978, we were moved to a storage area in the garage. It was a partly wooden, partly cement, enclosure built against one of the garage walls. It was built to be a storage area, but as the RPF grew so large, it was made the RPF's girl's sleeping area. Wooden bunks were built, that were about ½ to 1/3 the size of a regular twin bed. The bunks were built 3 and 4 stacks high, and were put in there side-by-side. Our mattresses' were pieces of foam cut to fit the bunks. It was like crawling into a hole to get into bed. You couldn't even sit

up because of the bunk above you, and it was difficult to try to turn over because they weren't wide enough. The worst problem was that being in the garage, we inhaled all the car fumes when cars would go through, in addition to the noise of cars that [people taking courses] and staff would make driving in and out (Rosenblum, n. d.: 3).

It seems remarkable that health, zoning, or safety inspectors never discovered these inappropriate sleeping quarters at the Fort Harrison, but Hana Whitfield explained that all RPFers were practiced and skilled in transforming their normal RPF sleeping areas into what looked like a regular furniture storage space, and doing so in a very short period of time (Whitfield, 1989: 6).

3. Social Maltreatment

The line between physical maltreatment and social maltreatment was not always clear, yet certain activities involving such occurrences as degradations, restrictions in verbal and written communication, and very low pay seem distinctive enough to warrant mention. RPF degradations were many. They included having to wear jumpsuits or boiler suits (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997: 22; Kent Interview with Young, 1994: 18; Superior Court of the State of California, 1984: 1432; Whitfield, 1989: 5), and having to refer to everyone as sir, (Rosenblum, n. d.: 2; Whitfield, 1989: 5), and RPFers were prohibited from walking running only (Rosenblum, n. d.: 1).

Many people indicated that their ability to communicate with others was severely curtailed, although they expressed the restrictions with slightly different emphases. Dale seemed to capture the basic restriction when he informed me that [y[ou could not talk to anybody [who] was not on the RPF unless you were spoken to... (Kent Interview with Dale, 1997: 5; see Kent Interview with Pat, 1997a: 23). Englishman Peter Ford stated that someone on the RPF was allowed to speak with only 1 person at all (the MAA [or Master-at-Arms], who directly oversaw the program (Ford, n. d.: 3; see Pignotti, 1989: 24). Julie Mayo insisted that she was not allowed to talk to the rest of the staff or even make a phone call (J. Mayo, 1996:8).

These restrictions on communicating included one's mail and telephone calls. Gerry Armstrong's accounts of RPF surveillance and communication censure were amplified by Robert Vaughn Young, who wrote on the internet that he underwent interrogations over the contents of letters exchanged with his

wife while he was incarcerated in the RPF program (Armstrong in Young, 1997: 1-2; see S. Young, 1994: 29). In an affidavit, David Mayo swore that I was not permitted to make or receive phone calls and all letters I wrote were read by Scientology security guards (Mayo 1994: 3). Dramatically, Nefertiti recounted meeting a woman on the RPF's RPF who was there because she had sent a letter to her husband--[a] member of the cult[--] revealing some details about the RPF. One is not supposed to talk about the gulag. She had violated the gulag's law of silence (Nefertiti, 1997: 4).

Communication restrictions extended to include the media.

While on the RPF, people were not allowed to listen to the radio, watch television, or read magazines and newspapers (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997: 23; Rosenblum, n. d.: 2).

For all of the deprivations that RPF members suffered, they still received almost no salary. During his 1977 period in the RPF, for example, Armstrong indicated that he received about \$4.30 a week for a hundred or more hours work (Superior Court of the State of California, 1984: 1463). Likewise, [i]n the RPF, Robert Vaughn Young revealed, I got paid five dollars a week for fourteen months (Kent Interview with Young, 1994: 24), which was the same amount the Pignotti collected (Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997: 17). Anne Rosenblum only got \$4.00 a week (Rosenblum, n. d.: 3).

4. Intensive Study of Ideology

When neither punishments nor pressing work assignments interfered with study time, RPF inmates spent up to five hours a day studying Scientology doctrines and participating in numerous auditing and security checking sessions. Each person worked with a co-auditor, and one had to complete the RPF's auditing course as well as successfully audit one's partner through it (Rosenblum, n. d.: 2). It seems likely that the purpose of this intense study was to infuse the person with Hubbard's teaching at the same time that an other aspect of the RPF was operating forced confessions. That is to say, as one was studying what Scientology considers to be the uncompromising truth, he or she also was receiving continuous messages (through the forced confessions) that the individual was weak, guilty, and completely dependent upon the leader's doctrines for salvation (see Kent , 1994).

The required study items and auditing actions became highly structured, with a 1980 checklist of RPF Graduation Requirements listing seven pages of courses, readings, educational demonstrations, essays, auditing, and confessions that inmates had to complete successfully in order to graduate from the program (Boards of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1980: 1-7). The checklist for just one course, for example, required that RPF inmates read ninety-two Hubbard bulletins, orders, and miscellaneous writings; perform ten demonstrations of concepts; listen to six tapes; perform twenty-six drills; write two essays; participate in ten hours of auditing; plus complete three additional auditing assignments (Board of Directors of the Churches of Scientology, 1974).

5. Forced Confessions

An intimate aspect of the ideological re-exposure, therefore, involved RPF inmates repeatedly confessing to alleged sins, crimes, and evil intentions (see Kent Interview with Dale, 1977: 9). According to Monica Pignotti, these forced confessions took two forms. First, while on the e-meter:

[t]hey had prepared lists that they called security checks where they would ask you all kinds of questions on every possible thing a person could have done wrong any possible thing you could think of in your life or... against the organization. Have you ever stolen anything? Have you ever had any unkind thoughts about L. Ron Hubbard? About Mary Sue Hubbard? About Scientology?... Have you ever committed murder?' Just a whole list where anything [might] read on the e-meter. And the auditor would say, 'What are you thinking of right now?' and you would have to answer the question until... the meter didn't read anymore...

[T]he other one that they did a lot of was repetitive commands: 'What have you done? what have you withheld? What have you done? What have you...' it was said over and over and over (Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997: 15; see Supreme Court of the State of California, 1984: 1487-1490, see 2545-2546).

People confessed to all manner of crimes, including ones allegedly from past lives (Nefertiti, 1997: 12). In essence, Scientology's supposedly religious tool the e-meter became the functional equivalent of a secular lie detector (see Kent Interview with Erlich, 1997: 11):

An important practical distinction between auditing and sec-checking is that Scientology does not consider information revealed in sec-checks to be confidential material (as auditing information is supposed to be). Consequently, RPF inmates likely realized that this information could be used against them at some future time. At least two people, however, who had been though the RPF stated that people on or associated with the RPF were in fact culling people's auditing (or 'pc' or 'pre-clear') files for crimes that people had to address (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997: 29; Supreme Court of the State of California, 1984: 2714).

Sec-checking could, and often did, become very intense and unnerving. Before high-ranking Scientology leaders sent Stacy Young to the RPF, they subjected her to what is called a gang-bang sec check involving two or more people angrily and quickly firing questions at someone in an attempt to break down the person emotionally:

Two very large, strong men..., locked me in a room and interrogated me for hours, During the interrogation, they screamed and swore at me. They accused me of all sorts of crimes against Scientology. They demanded that I confess to being an enemy agent (S. Young, 1994: 28).

Julie Mayo appears to have experienced gang-bang sec checks, but after she already was in the RPF program. RPF staff pulled in Julie and fifteen other people late one night, and sat her:

opposite from the three who faced me. I was told that unless I confessed to working for the IRS, the FBI, or other government agency, I was going to: A) be sent to jail; B) lose my eternity; C) be banned from [Scientology] tech[nology] lines forever. When I said [that] I didn't work for a government agency, I was told that they might go lighter on me if I confessed to supplying [a person] with a mailing list. I said [that] I hadn't done that either, so [I] was told to go think about it and write my confession (J. Mayo, 1996: 7).

Presumably her husband, David, also went through similar grillings, since he indicated that I was often awakened during the night and interrogated... (D. Mayo, 1994: 3).

6. Success Stories

For inmates attempting to complete the program, among the final, obligatory activities that they must do is write success stories about how the RPF transformed their lives. For years prior to the RPF program, Hubbard had in place an organizational requirement that Scientologists were required to provide glowing accounts of Scientology's benefits, so the requirement that inmates had to produce them about the RPF merely was following policy. With public relations in mind, Hubbard wrote in 1968:

[f]or purposes of distribution of Scientology and getting it into the hands of the millions, standard tech producing results and being broadcast by word of mouth by pcs [pre-clears people below a certain level of courses] and students is one of the best programmes. People who have not had the results or wins are not likely to assist distribution and indeed are a liability (Hubbard, 1968: 140 [emphasis in original]).

Hubbard also realized that win stories provided invaluable information about how people felt concerning their Scientology experiences, so he wrote that Success is the final police point of an org. All [s]tudents and pcs must go to Success before leaving an org even on a leave of absence (Hubbard, 1968: 140 [emphasis in original]). Success stories about RPF wins, therefore, simply followed policy, and they also may have provided some protection in the future if former RPFers became critical of their incarceration in the program.

Far less extensive in content or design than the final confessions that Chinese and Western victims of thought reform programs had to write for their re-educators in the late 1940s and early 1950s (see Lifton, 1961: 266-273, 473-484), the RPF success stories nevertheless appeared to follow an outline or formula. In them, graduating RPFers had to acknowledge their alleged previous deficiencies that justified their RPF assignments, praise the quality of Scientology instruction and training that they have received in the RPF, identify how this instruction and training combined with other aspects of the RPF to positively transform their lives, and thank Hubbard and the organization for their RPF experiences.

A published RPF success story from March, 1977, illustrates the formula. A person identified only as B.G. proclaimed that:

[t]he RPF is the most fantastic process LRH [L.Ron Hubbard] has yet devised. It's pure, no holds barred Scientology. And it's

for real. When I walked in the door here several months ago the only thing I knew for certain was that there was no hope. I had totally and utterly betrayed LRH and all SO [Sea Org] [m]embers and Scientologists everywhere. And in so doing [I] had sold my future down the drain.

..... I found that, as an RPFer I had only two possible courses of action Win, or die in the attempt, and I had 50 or so tough, dedicated, confront anything fellows making sure I didn't die. While I've been here I've received the best auditing and training I've ever had....

I'm about to graduate now. The greatest single win I've ever had in my existence I got right here. I know [that] Scientology works. I have total certainty on my ability to handle myself and others and on other's ability to handle me and others using LRH's Tech. And I know that the RPF is where it all comes together. It's where the RPF makes it and that's something. Thanks to LRH I have a future and a damn bright one too! (Sea Organization, 1977: [5]).

Having followed the fomula--(acknowledging pre-RPF crisis, praising RPF training and techniques, glorifying Hubbard, and claiming a successful completion of the program), this person probably was released from the RPF within a matter of days.

The Impact on Some Scientologists Who Saw the RPF in Operation

Two very revealing accounts exists by people who were Scientologists and had brief but disturbing encounters with RPF inmates. Their accounts provide some indications of the cumulative impact the brainwashing and confinement efforts had on the people who experienced them. One account was from former member Joe Cisar, who:

stumbled into the RPF's RPF one time in the tunnels below the Cedars complex in L.A. There w[ere] about a dozen people who apparently had been sleeping in these tiny rooms. (There were a couple of blankets on the floor.) Both men and women [were down there]. A man was cutting a woman's pant leg with a knife while she was wearing the pants, and he had sliced her foot. Blood was running down her ankle onto her foot and was puddling on the floor. She looked up at me and gave me... what I would consider to be an insane smile and said, I caused my foot to be in the way of his knife.' Two or three of the people who were crouching and laying about on the floor looked up at me as if it were some kind of wonderful joke. I backed out the way I came in. One of

Scientology's big promotion schemes is to tell people that they need to be 'at cause.' These people weren't at cause over anything[. T]hey had degenerated back to the Middle Ages.

That's what I knew about the RPF when the Scientology ethics officer told me to report down there for indefinite duty. I told her [that] they could get me down there, but I'd put several of them in the hospital first, and reminded her that I was a Viet Nam veteran. I was one of the few Sea Org members who had managed to hang onto [his or her] car, and I left that night (Cisar, 1997: 3).

One wonders what would have happened to Cisar had he not seen the conditions of these inmates prior to his own RPF assignment.

The other dramatic glimpse into RPF life came from Ann Bailey, who was involved in moving Scientology into its newly acquired former hospital (called the Cedars of Lebanon complex) in the summer of 1978. After a move that taxed the levels of her physical endurance, she found herself assigned to guard the secret, upper level theological (Operating Thetan or OT) documents that were in a room without a door. They were in the former hospital's old morgue, and she sat there for hours amidst the lingering smell of death and chemicals and dissection (Bailey, n. d.: 60). Then:

[s]uddenly during the third hour I was aware of shadows in the corridor beyond me. [T]hey were people. Slowly I realized that an entire group of people lived and worked down there. I was so tired [that] it took me a long time to realize who they were. Then it hit me. [They were t]he Cedars RPF. They lived and worked down in this stinkhole. This was their Org. Then I really found out what had happened to them. Filthy, tired, skeletons appeared before me and started begging to see the OT folders. I thought I looked bad, but I looked beautiful compared to them. They crowded around me pushing and shoving, then the mood turned ugly. They started hitting each other to get into the room behind me. I realized what had happened. They had been totally broken. They were animals, not humans. I saw four of my friends, one a Class Nine OT, fighting to get by me. They were punching each other in the face, pulling hair, kicking. And way down in this cellar no one could hear them, no one cared.

Someone suddenly hit me hard. I realized [that] they were turning their anger on me[. T]hey would beat me up to get the folders. I guess in periods of deep stress we all go a little insane--[s]urvival of the fittest. From somewhere in my tired brain, strength came. I stood up with all my TR's [i.e., Scientology communication drills] as in as they had ever been, [and] all my training on control of groups came back. Friends,' I said. Believe me, I am your friend. By some strange fate I am not with you on the RPF. But believe me if you don't get out of here right now, I know [that] you will be punished. Go now before it's too late.' And they ran away into the dark. When I sat down I was trembling all over. Because the real intent of my message had been for them to get out of the hospital. Leave Cedars. But I don't think any of them got the message (Bailey, n. d.: 61-62).

She was out of Sea Org in a week.

Conclusion: Brainwashing as a Practice in Scientology and a Concept in Sociology

Taken together, the effect of these actions and pressures on people who experience them can be profound. In environments where the Scientology organization and its leadership attain totalistic control over RPF inmates, researchers should expect to see a high degree of conformity among recent RPF graduates. Certainly Monica Pignotti was correct when she concluded that [t]he lesson we were to learn on the RPF was to obey orders without question, regardless of how we felt about it or who was giving the orders (Pignotti, 1989: 23). Pat's conclusion was even crisper when she answered that the RPF's purpose was just re-indoctrination just to break you down (Kent Interview with Pat, 1997b: 5). I go one step further and add that the final intent of the RPF was (and is) to mold people into the closed ideology of Scientology, where members identify their goals and their strategies with those of the organization. Working in conjunction with forced confinement and various forms of physical and social maltreatment, the intensive study of ideology combines with obligatory confessions to severely weaken people's own moral structures and the values that represent them. When successful, therefore, Scientology's brainwashing leads people to accept the moral code and ideational model of founder L. Ron Hubbard. As Gerry Armstrong realized, people on the RPF necessarily bec[a]me so compliant that they thanked their punishers for the punishment, and wrote... success stor[ies] (to be used against them in the future if they ever realize [that] they had been abused and sought redress for that

abuse) (Armstrong in Young, 1997: 5). Indeed, writing such a story was a prerequisite for completing the RPF program.

The implications of this study are modest but significant for sociology (especially the sociology of religion) but much greater for contemporary political and legal discussions. Social scientists need not alter their definition of brainwashing, but should simply acknowledge that at least one contemporary ideological organization utilizes brainwashing in an attempt to retain its members. While this study cannot answer crucial questions about the long term implications for people who have been through this particular brainwashing program (compare Schein, 1961: 284), no doubt exists that Scientology's founder gave considerable thought to brainwashing techniques and imposed them on those of his followers whom he believed were harbouring thoughts or performing actions against him or the organization. The brainwashing term, therefore, has validity within some social science discourse.

Contrary to the judgements of some social scientists, the term also has validity in the discourse of politics and legal debates, in this case about human rights in the context of Scientology's non-religious status in Germany and America 's granting the organization tax-exempt status. German politicians who oppose Scientology's quest for religious standing are well versed in the existence of the RPF programs (see Kent , 1997), and they are aware that the program still exists (Hessische Allgemeine, 1997). Without question the RPF's operation violates a number of human rights statutes, probably involving such topics as freedom of religion and conscience, labour laws, arbitrary arrest, forcible confinement, and protection of the dignity of the human being (Kent, 1997: 39). The human right issues become even more significant if the accounts of children and teenagers on RPF programs are true (Jebson, 1997; Kent Interview with Dale, 1997: 4, 16; Kent Interview with Pat, 1997a: 32; Kent Interview with Pignotti, 1997: 30). Ironically, as the United States Department of State heightens its criticism against Germany's handling of the Scientology affair, at least three of these abusive programs continue to operate on American soil.

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