



CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

March 12, 2015

Emmet McDermott  
*The Hollywood Reporter*  
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Dear Mr. McDermott:

Thank you for your questions. You at least did more to find out about Scientology than Mr. Gibney did in the two years he spent putting together his bigoted propaganda piece.

We agree with a reviewer of the documentary who has described Mr. Gibney's film as "pointless scaremongering." All of Mr. Gibney's sources serve that purpose. They spew false, embellished and hyperbolic tales to create sensationalistic hatred toward the Church with a portrait none of its parishioners, staff or clergy recognize.

In two hours this film racks up more falsehoods, errors, embellished tales and blatant omissions than were committed by *Rolling Stone*, Brian Williams and Bill O'Reilly combined. By our calculation, the film on average includes at least one major error every two minutes.

Separately, THR's attorneys received a letter from Church counsel on Marty Rathbun's false wiretapping allegation. That one goes beyond mere bigoted hate speech and falsely accuses the Church of criminal conduct. I ask that you do not reprint this lie.

That being said, the false allegations in Gibney's film are reflected in each of the questions you ask. Those questions bear no relationship to L. Ron Hubbard or to the Scientology religion. Rather than provide a response to each of these questions, which are part of Gibney's propaganda, I am going to take up the sources of these allegations so you understand their motivations to spread hatred, religious bigotry and lies. We are not trying to discredit these people. It is simply that Mr. Gibney is miscrediting them.

Our position regarding the film and each of its sources is clearly stated in the vignettes and documents we spoke of earlier this week and which I ask that you reference in your article.

The inclusion of any one of these liars is enough to irrevocably taint the film as biased propaganda. Including all of them is inexcusable. For example:

- Spanky Taylor: Her entire story is a lie. Besides the fact that she has been gone for 30 years—an eternity of time in a new religion as we are—she never “escaped” from the Church as she and Mr. Gibney claim. That’s because she remained an active Scientologist for *six more years* after leaving her staff position. Her husband exposed this lie about her “escape” and confirmed that she remained in the Church. Now, Lawrence Wright is shifting his story to admit, as he did on public radio this week, that she continued in the Church after this supposed “escape.” <http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/spanky-taylor.html>
- Sara Goldberg: Mr. Gibney painted a sob story of a grandmother struggling to keep her family together, but didn’t want to speak with her ex-husband, her daughter or anyone else in the family even when they were just a few minutes away from his offices in New York and willing to see him at his convenience. Now you see them on camera, exposing how Sara Goldberg broke up her own family because of her drug-abusing son. There is even video footage of her son being arrested, along with statements from the rest of the family about what factually occurred. And that’s relevant information, as the Church does not and did not tear any family apart. Withholding all of this relevant information makes the film inaccurate and deceitful. <http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/sara-goldberg.html>
- Hana Whitfield also has motives to lie about the Church, not the least of which is she left more than 30 years ago. (Like Spanky Taylor, she has been gone for half of the time the entire religion has existed.) Whitfield filed a \$1 billion class action lawsuit that was thrown out by the judge *six* times and labelled “incomprehensible.” Not getting her payday, she became a “deprogrammer” for which Alex Gibney has become an apologist—a practice recognized as the equivalent of kidnapping, coercion and denial of human rights. Mr. Gibney’s film also doesn’t mention that Hana Whitfield’s “mental state” could be related

to her having conspired to murder her father.

<http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/hana-whitfield.html>

- Mr. Gibney doesn't disclose that his primary sources are self-admitted liars and were involved—according to Marty Rathbun—in suborning perjury and obstructing justice. The same Marty Rathbun who was the leader of his now-defunct small Texas cult, a tiny group of anti-religious haters who have been joined at the hip for six years in a campaign to make up stories about their former religion. The same Rathbun who has now descended to being a “deprogrammer” for his personal profit. The same Rathbun Mr. Gibney puts on a pedestal while making a false and defamatory allegation about the Church and its leadership being involved in a “wiretap” that never happened. When Rathbun was questioned further, he not only conveniently could not provide any specifics of who did what or offer any corroboration, he also could not explain how he suddenly “remembered” this alleged incident six years into his venomous campaign against the Church that has included dozens of media interviews, thousands of online rants and, most important, countless hours of interviews with Lawrence Wright, whose book the film is purportedly based upon. It completely defies logic that Rathbun “forgot” to mention such an event or somehow just “remembered” it. Even Mr. Gibney's other primary source—Mike Rinder—denies having any firsthand knowledge—because it didn't happen. <http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/marty-rathbun.html>
- And you have Mike Rinder, who admitted in a January deposition to the exact opposite of what he says to Mr. Gibney in the film. He's also a tainted source because he is paid by law firms seeking to score a payday suing the Church. His domestic abuse is documented by his ex-wife, brother, daughter and his ex-wife's surgeon, and all of this would have been relevant to the film since Gibney shamelessly has Rinder lie about his ex-wife yet he didn't ask her for comment or to sit for an interview, even when she was in New York to see him. Alex Gibney and HBO cynically repackaged Mike Rinder into the poster boy for their new propaganda film. They flew Rinder around the country in five-star luxury to shill for their religious hatred, never mentioning that Rinder was expelled from his former religion for gross malfeasance. They hid that Mike Rinder can't hold a job and his only source of income is payment for attacking Scientology. Gibney knew all this but relevant facts would have popped the phony bubble of legitimacy Gibney created around his “star.”

And, at a time when religious hatred is spreading through the world and inciting violence, it is also irresponsible to release any film about religion with someone so obsessed with inciting hatred as Mike Rinder, a paid anti-religionist and a domestic abuser. <http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/mike-rinder.html>

- You have seen the film, so you have seen the blatantly absurd “ant” story is pure propaganda and is an intentional misrepresentation of the Church production studio facility that, among other amenities, includes a pool, tennis courts, golf course, housekeeping services for staff and facilities so attractive, local outside community groups regularly use them for events. The person telling Mr. Gibney this lie about ants on camera, Tom DeVocht, had such a propensity to lie that he once confessed that he believed his only sin was “getting caught.” HBO ignored all efforts by his ex-wife to provide information showing he is a pathological liar and stole from her. She also would have told them how DeVocht’s motives stem from his being expelled after he wasted millions of construction dollars due to his incompetence and deceit. Mr. Gibney has no firsthand knowledge of these allegations and never visited the property. He never even asked to visit, or to film there. Instead Mr. Gibney uses stale, made-up stories and portrays them as the truth. <http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/exterminating-gibneys-propaganda.html>
- Yet another source for the film, Marc Headley, is a professional liar who was outed during litigation as a paid tabloid source for, among other publications, the scandal-ridden *News of the World* that folded in disgrace over the British hacking scandal. Headley’s failed lawsuit spawned the film’s core myth—that the Church is involved in “abuses” which are entirely the invention of this same small, failed Texas cult. A federal judge tossed out these same allegations in 2010—an Appeals Court unanimously upheld that decision in 2012—and Headley was ordered to pay the Church \$42,000 in court costs. Mr. Gibney even thanked Headley at the premiere. Yet all of the allegations Headley made in Wright’s book were dismissed as meritless by a lower court and upheld by the Appellate Court prior to the book ever being published. Given these phony claims are at the heart of Mr. Gibney’s film, their unravelling is reason enough to pull the film. <http://www.freedommag.org/hbo/videos/marc-headley.html>

Lastly, Lawrence Wright is obviously suffering from an acute case of jealousy of Mr. Hubbard and thus has tried to slander him out of spite.

Mr. Hubbard was a writer—one of the giants of the Golden Age of pulp fiction, during the Great Depression. He was also the author of 13 *New York Times* bestsellers in the 1980s. Indeed, his works are published to this day in 50 languages and have sold hundreds of millions of copies, something Wright could only wish to accomplish

Mr. Hubbard was also a man who travelled the world and into the Far East, in the 1920s, studying and learning Eastern religions. And this at a time when most young men had never ventured beyond the boundaries of their own town. He was also a member of the famed Explorers Club and was awarded three expedition flags. He was also the youngest Eagle Scout in America at the age of 13, a licensed pilot at the advent of aviation, and a master mariner, licensed to captain any vessel on any ocean. In addition to all this, his greatest contributions to Mankind are his discoveries on the mind and spirit that form the Scientology religion. Millions of people around the world consider him their greatest friend for the help he has provided.

He was recently named one of the most influential Americans of all times in the *Smithsonian* Spring 2015 edition.

Your readers should have the benefit of the information I have provided you.

Please also include our full statement which is enclosed.

Thank you very much.

Regards,

Karin Pouw