



Scientology : The Thriving Cult of Greed and Power

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(8 of 11)

The Feshbachs, who wear jackets bearing the slogan "stock busters," insist they run a clean shop. But as part of a current probe into possible insider stock trading, federal officials are reportedly investigating whether the Feshbachs received confidential information from FDA employees. The brothers seem aligned with Scientology's war on psychiatry and medicine: many of their targets are health and biotechnology firms. "Legitimate short selling performs a public service by deflating hyped stocks," says Robert Flaherty, the editor of Equities magazine and a harsh critic of the brothers. "But the Feshbachs have damaged scores of good start-ups."

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Occasionally a Scientologist's business antics land him in jail. Last August a former devotee named Steven Fishman began serving a five-year prison term in Florida. His crime: stealing blank stock-confirmation slips from his employer, a major brokerage house, to use as proof that he owned stock entitling him to join dozens of successful class-action lawsuits. Fishman made roughly \$1 million this way from 1983 to 1988 and spent as much as 30% of the loot on Scientology books and tapes.

Scientology denies any tie to the Fishman scam, a claim strongly disputed by both Fishman and his longtime psychiatrist, Uwe Geertz, a prominent Florida hypnotist. Both men claim that when arrested, Fishman was ordered by the church to kill Geertz and then do an "EOC," or end of cycle, which is church jargon for suicide.

BOOK PUBLISHING. Scientology mischiefmaking has even moved to the book industry. Since 1985 at least a dozen Hubbard books, printed by a church company, have made best-seller lists. They range from a 5,000-page sci-fi decology (Black Genesis, The Enemy Within, An Alien Affair) to the 40-year-old Dianetics. In 1988 the trade publication Publishers Weekly awarded the dead author a plaque commemorating the appearance of Dianetics on its best-seller list for 100 consecutive weeks.

Critics pan most of Hubbard's books as unreadable, while defectors claim that church insiders are sometimes the real authors. Even so, Scientology has sent out armies of its followers to buy the group's books at such major chains as B. Dalton's and Waldenbooks to sustain the illusion of a best-selling author. A former Dalton's manager says that some books arrived in his store with the chain's price stickers already on them, suggesting that copies are being recycled. Scientology claims that sales of Hubbard books now top 90 million worldwide. The scheme, set up to gain converts and credibility, is coupled with a radio and TV advertising campaign virtually unparalleled in the book industry.

« PREV PAGE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 NEXT PAGE »

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PETR DRULAK, director of the Institute of International Relations, on the Obama Administration's anticipated new proposal for Poland to jointly host an SM-3 missile system

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