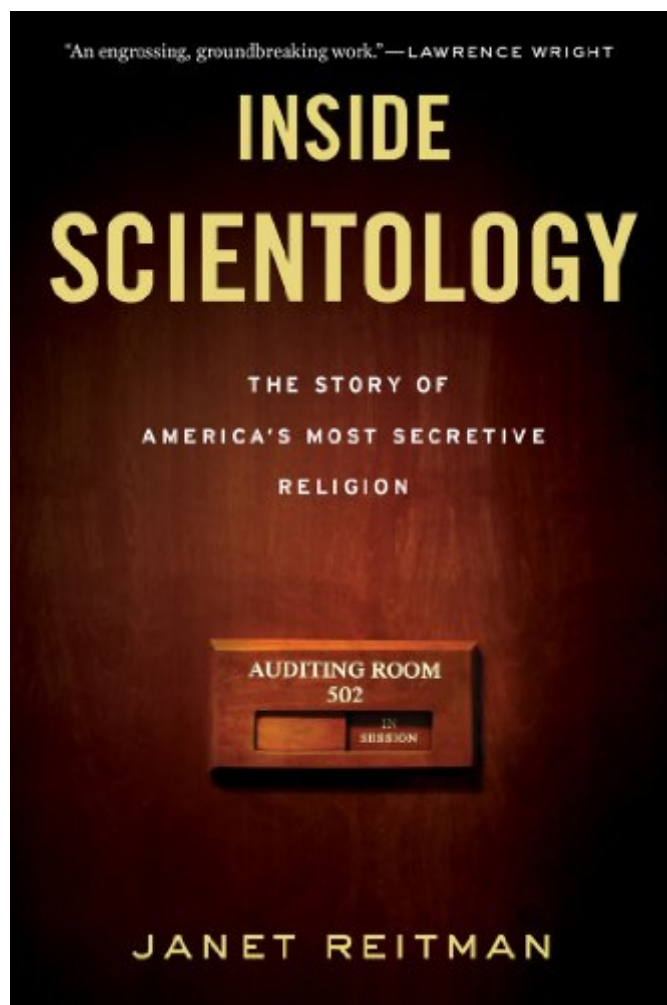


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Inside Scientology: The Story Of America's Most Secretive Religion



Synopsis

“A masterful piece of reporting . . . Reitman tells a spellbinding story of a larger-than-life personality whose quirks, ticks and charisma shaped America’s newest homegrown religious movement.” Washington Post
Scientology is known for its celebrity believers and its team of “volunteer ministers” at disaster sites such as the World Trade Center; its notably aggressive response to criticism or its attacks on psychiatry; its requirement that believers pay as much as hundreds of thousands of dollars to reach the highest levels of salvation. But for all its notoriety, Scientology has remained America’s least understood new religion, even as it has been one of its most successful. Now Janet Reitman tells its riveting full story in the first objective modern history of Scientology, at last revealing the astonishing truth about life within the controversial religion for its members and ex-members. Based on five years of research, confidential documents, and extensive interviews with current and former Scientologists, this is an utterly compelling work of nonfiction and the defining work on an elusive faith. “A meticulously researched history and revealing exposé, a frightening portrait of a religion that many find not just controversial, but dangerous.” Boston Globe
“This book is fearless.” Wall Street Journal
A New York Times Notable Book.com
Best Books of 2011, Nonfiction
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Customer Reviews

Back in the early 1990s, Joan Rivers Talk Show featured guests like Star Tabloid Magazine's columnist Janet Charlton. Rivers asked "What can't you write about?" Well, Charlton answered "Scientology." Somehow that moment has stuck with me for over 2 decades. What was it about this organization whether religious or new age is so secretive and why? What is Scientology and how does it operate? The author, Janet Reitman, has written a controversial detailed analysis in America's most secretive religion which features A-list stars like Tom Cruise and John Travolta as it's members. There are others like Oscar Winner Paul Haggis, actresses like Anne Archer, Mimi Rogers, Leah Remini (noticeably absent in this book), Jenna Elfman, Michelle Stafford, Sharon Case, Nancy Cartwright (who donated \$10 million dollars in 2007), Kirstie Alley, etc. There are those like Will Smith and his wife who send their children to scientology schools but aren't scientologists. The membership is either a lot bigger or smaller than it appears. We don't really know. The celebrity scientology centre in Los Angeles is far less scary than it appears to be. The author does write about Tom Cruise and his recruitment with the help of his first wife Mimi Rogers (daughter of a powerful member). The first marriage ended in divorce. Tom Cruise seems to be the appointed spokesman for scientology. John Travolta is still a member but his son's death is never addressed in the book. Regardless, the author has done a brilliant job in gathering the information about L.R. Hubbard, the scientology organization's history, and it's present status. Of course, scientology took a dark turn in the 1970s when another author, Paulette Cooper (wrote Scandal of Scientology in 1971) was targeted for discrediting her book and herself. So much was the paranoia that it landed scientology in a world of trouble. Scientology's paranoia is abundantly a big part of this religion's problem. They don't want anybody to criticize against it especially former members. The history of the religion is now run by David Miscavage, a diabolical dictator and his regime. Many former members have decided to start their own independent scientologist organization away from his rule. The author speaks with scientologists, past and present, to provide a wider perspective. The tragic death of Lisa MacPherson doesn't go unnoticed especially when she needed to be cared for by professionals rather than other scientologists. Anyway, the author shows the good and the bad about scientology. She tries to be objective about the religion and it's secrecy. With today's internet access and available information, the religion has become a joke to some extent. Those true hard believing scientologists have either stayed with the organization or have left because of disagreements with leadership. Still this book answers a lot of questions about scientology but I still

have have questions like why is scientology so powerful in Hollywood? We don't really know their scope of power. But when I remember how Charlton answered that question over 20 years ago, I believe that more is involved. Is scientology really running Hollywood anyway underneath the surface? Scientology has a lot of money, secrecy, and power in the entertainment industry. I believe there are lot more scientologists who control the puppet strings in the entertainment business. You have to ask yourself why Charlton was discouraged from pursuing scientology? She wrote for the Star tabloid and not the New York Times. Of course, scientology doesn't like bad publicity but still she's a gossip columnist and not an investigative reporter. Her credibility is not taken seriously but enough by the powers that be to be scared off. I hope there are other books written about the truth of scientology and to expose the myths and secrets once and for all.

As someone who knew close to nothing about Scientology (besides what has been shown on South Park), I found this to be a very informative book about the history of this 'religion'. It's difficult to say with certainty how biased it is. Clearly the Church denies that it was well-researched, but if you read the book, you're not really surprised by their reaction. Janet is not an ex-Scientologist, so the only kind of bias I can conceive of would be to have a book that highlights the controversial aspects of the Church's history for dramatic effect. But, to be fair, she mentioned her fair share of neutral factoids. I'm having trouble remembering if she ever said anything explicitly positive about the Church, except perhaps to say that a lot of people felt that they benefitted from auditing. This latter point was something that was significant for me in my views of Scientology. I used to say, "If someone asks me whether or not I believe in Scientology, I'd say that I don't believe that Scientologists believe in Scientology" (mostly keeping the whole Xenu story in mind while saying this). Now I can say confidently that people do believe in Scientology, or at least aspects of it, and they have reaped benefits from these parts that they adhere to. Overall, it was fascinating to read about Scientology, albeit overall alarming. You will not come away from reading this book without thinking that they are a dangerous cult (certainly not as dangerous as IS, say, but dangerous nonetheless). I gave it four stars instead of five partially because: 1) it got somewhat dull in perhaps the first third of the book and I put it down for awhile. I think maybe I got tired of reading about L. Ron Hubbard, but it picked up for me at the Lisa McPherson case and stayed interesting throughout the rest of the book. Not that it's not interesting at ALL early on (e.g., you become more convinced that L Ron's Science Fiction writing had a hand in crafting some of the doctrines of Scientology); 2) much of Scientology involves terms and acronyms that are unique to the religion, and there were many times throughout the book where I forgot what an acronym stood for, as it seemed like they

were defined 1 or more chapters earlier. It would have been more helpful if Janet redefined them more often or provided a glossary at the back of the book. An example is the fact that the headquarters for Scientology is called both Gold and Int, which I had forgotten and was wondering what the difference between the two was; 3) the same problem occurred with people in the book. I'll never forget L. Ron, David Miscavige, Lisa McPherson (or celebrities like Tom Cruise), but many of the other individuals that were mentioned throughout the book were not important enough or mentioned often enough to store in long term memory. A glossary would have helped here too. Besides these relatively minor gripes, if you're interested in learning about Scientology from an outside perspective, I'm sure you can't do much better than this book!

This is the fourth book on Scientology and it is at the top of my list. While others offered fascinating perspectives from a former insiders view, Reitman offers a comprehensive history and objective story. It was a great read. I highly recommend it.

I've read several books on the history/abuse/personal stories on Scientology and this book is completely thorough with an abundance of references. It's a bit slow at the beginning while giving all the history about LRH and how Scientology and Dianetics evolved but it's worth reading through. I felt like I understood a lot more about Scientology after reading. It's absolutely fascinating to hear about a world where people can be completely taken in and become virtual prisoners to a 'religion'. Just prior to this I read 'Beyond Belief' by Jenna Miscavige Hill which was excellent and also 'Blown for Good' by Marc Headley. Makes you wonder how celebrities can hear or read about such atrocities (child labor, family disconnection, etc) and still support Scientology with their money (lots of it) and unwavering devotion. However, after reading about the lengths The Church will go to to keep you in or prevent you from speaking out I feel many are afraid to leave.

Having read several books on the subject I was pleasantly surprised by the insight this book provided. Many of us have read individual accounts of life in Scientology, but Ms. Reitman has approached this with a cold journalistic eye which I find refreshing. It is possible that an underground exists where information contained in these enlightening books is being disseminated to those who have been conned into this slavish pyramid scheme. Read this and discuss the topic with your friends as you never know who will be lured in by the promise of saving the universe while exhausting their savings.

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