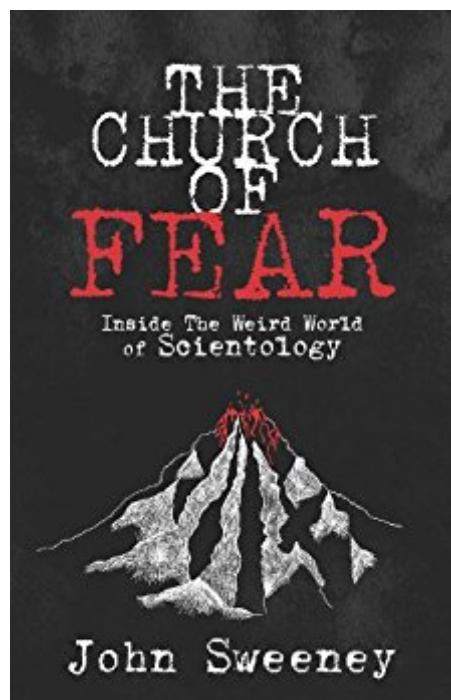


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The Church Of Fear: Inside The Weird World Of Scientology



Synopsis

Tom Cruise and John Travolta say the Church of Scientology is a force for good. Others disagree. Award-winning journalist John Sweeney investigated the Church for more than half a decade. During that time he was intimidated, spied on and followed and the results were spectacular: Sweeney lost his temper with the Church's spokesman on camera and his infamous 'exploding tomato' clip was seen by millions around the world. In **THE CHURCH OF FEAR** Sweeney tells the full story of his experiences for the first time and paints a devastating picture of this strange organisation, from former Scientologists who tell heartbreaking stories of families torn apart and lives ruined to its current followers who say it is the solution to many of mankind's problems. This is the real story of the Church by the reporter who was brave enough to take it on.

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Customer Reviews

If you have seen John Sweeney's pioneering Panorama specials, this book is the perfect addition. Find out what was going on behind the scenes of Scientology as they dogged Panorama's every

step. Scientology's ham-handed plots to follow, second guess, pester, provoke and hamper Sweeney's efforts remind me of the Three Stooges with Miscavige as Moe. The Scientology-hired PIs play the Keystone Cops. Sweeney includes transcripts of the Scientology interviews that Panorama was forbidden to show. The "fine women" were prompted to robotically recite the party lines. Their over-the-top praise for David Miscavige is comical. This book helps fit the puzzle pieces together of who is who in the ex-Scientologist and what they endured. Now I know who it was that Sweeney interviewed on the parking lot roof. Tommy Davis appeared and attempted to "dead agent" the man. This proved that they were being followed, that Fair Game is indeed a cult policy and that Scientology is barking mad. This is an indispensable book for Scientology watchers. It filled in many gaps and put a lot of pieces together in this insane Wonderland that is the cult of Scientology. Scientology is still using the exact same playbook as seen in Sweeney's book. They have no learning curve.

I wouldn't have trusted this book had Sweeney not been forthcoming with his obvious -- and understandable -- bias. Bias aside, he does a good job of presenting both sides. As a fellow journalist, I can't help but be a bit critical of the reporting he describes because he sounds overly antagonistic from the get-go, which surely gave the church too much to work with in its counter-campaign. That said, Sweeney is an accomplished journalist and I might have fared a million times worse, so while I, in hindsight, can see some flaws in the approach, I don't pretend that I necessarily wouldn't have made the same mistakes -- and far sooner. I'm glad Sweeney wrote this. It was a fascinating read.

I will be honest - I've not yet finished this book - but of the 6 books I've read about Scientology, it is by far my favourite. Since I am not a Scientologist, I do not agree with it being classified a religion, and, to be blunt, think most of it is just nuts - it is nice to read an author with whom I can shake my head and roll my eyes. He makes it quite apparent that he is in no way a fan of the "church". He is no saint, he also makes that clear, but I am not sure my halo would stay in place if I had to deal with some of the stuff he has endured dealing with this group. Of the books I've read, it is one of the least insightful in terms of learning about the "religion" itself, but it is the most enjoyable!

If you watched John Sweeney's Scientology exposes on Panorama (BBC), you know exactly what to expect in this book. CoS is as crazy as ever, but John rarely treads into any new territory. But, he does expand on the behind the scenes during the production these programs. The stories are

intriguing. For example, John expands on his interviews with various adherents of Scientology. These are in this exposé in a fleeting couple of moments (since Scientology threatened legal action if any significant footage was used), but John's full story of how excruciatingly awkward it was for him to get accosted by the likes of Kristie Alley and Anne Archer is compelling. Definitely an entertaining read, and also helps expose the ills of Scientology. Recommended.

Whilst I did see the Panorama programme and also have read other books by ex-Scientologists mentioned in the book, therefore already aware of a lot of the content, I still enjoyed this book immensely. I had trouble putting it down, thereby finishing it in two days, and was disappointed when I got to the end as I could have carried on reading. Very well written and highly recommended.

I finished the book in one sitting. I have read several books that are first hand accounts of Scientology and was of the mind that I might have reached the limit in new and different ways the story can be told but I loved the new twist in this account. I never saw the Panorama programmes but applaud the way the real time actions of Scientology became the story. The new information in the form of electronic communications during the "handling" of the BBC original investigation is still shocking to anyone familiar with stories of Scientology leaders Miscavige's behaviour, as are the sycophantic responses by staff reporting to him. An entertaining read, with new information for the veteran Scientology watcher and a great companion read for fans of his Panorama work. A welcome addition to the library of critical works about this cult.

I had no idea a few years ago what Scientology was all about nor did I really care until I stumbled across John Sweeney's BBC documentary on YouTube. From that documentary I was fascinated by this "Church". I did try to look at both sides but it is just obvious to me it is a cult, but a powerful one. I hope this helps people still trapped in the cult, I realize how tough it is to break away for a variety of reasons. Thank you John Sweeney for bringing this to light and I guess thanks for turning me into an obsessive Scientology watcher!!!!!!

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