



CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY  
INTERNATIONAL

October 4, 2019

Erik Crouch  
News Editor  
Committee to Protect Journalists  
Email: [ecrouch@cpj.org](mailto:ecrouch@cpj.org)

**Re: Church of Scientology**

Dear Mr. Crouch:

We have received your inquiry. You asked if we dispute the accuracy of either of your characterizations. We do. Both of them misstate facts and are based on assumptions that are untrue.

There was no litigation filed concerning Lawrence Wright's book at all and the case concerning Richard Behar's May 1991 article in *Time* Magazine was filed nearly three decades ago. You will look in vain for any lawsuits the Church of Scientology has filed against the press since the 1990s. There aren't any. Thus, the primary assumption in your questions is an urban legend that is simply untrue.

LAWRENCE WRIGHT

Lawrence Wright worked for two years on his book, subsidized by one of the largest book publishers in the world. Contrary to your first assumption, the Church of Scientology never took any legal actions against Wright. In fact, we offered him extensive cooperation. He ignored those offers. And when the book was ultimately published with dozens of errors, we implored the publisher to make corrections. While the publisher did correct nearly a dozen of the errors in the book, the majority remained uncorrected.

Finally, we published our own online white paper detailing the errors in the book and the bias of its author. The most surprising was the claim that Mr. Wright interviewed something on the order of 200 Scientologists—past and current. When the Church checked the list, only about a dozen were current Scientologists, none of whom were interviewed for the book. For an author to misrepresent the extent of his research and reporting seriously undermines the credibility of his

reporting. I encourage you to visit the online white paper at <http://www.lawrencewrightgoingclear.com>

Lawrence Wright's reporting was so biased and one-sided that his principal source, former Scientologist Mark Rathbun, has published a series of videos outlining Wright's difficulties in dealing with the truth in preparing his manuscript. In the opening video in the series, Rathbun states:

[I]t was one viewpoint, it was one anti-Scientology narrative that excluded anything that might muddy that narrative, or might throw any bit of it into doubt. That was the end product of the book, *Going Clear*.

I identified going through it, and for me it was very frustrating because a lot of that other viewpoint, I provided. Some of which I've provided taped evidence of, but that's only a small minutia, a fraction of the amount of explanations and facts and education on the subject that I provided to Wright that never made it into the book because it didn't fit the anti-Scientology narrative.

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFwCysSCw4g> and the other parts of this 21-part series that follow.

#### *TIME* MAGAZINE SUIT

*New York Times v. Sullivan* establishes such a high bar for a defamation plaintiff that reporters are amply protected. Our case did not change that.

The lawsuit was, however, more than a simple defamation case concerning a hatchet job rife with errors. The Church of Scientology has a duty to its parishioners to ensure that portrayals of the Church in the press do not open the door to bigotry and persecution.

Underlying the claims themselves was the issue of whether a multibillion-dollar media giant could trample on the rights of the subject of one of their articles with impunity and with a blatant disregard for the truth.

In fact, discovery revealed that as well-healed as Time, Inc. was, it had additional financial backing. Pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly paid Time, Inc. more than \$100,000 to reprint 250,000 copies of the magazine that Lilly sent to doctors in the United States.

There is no question that Richard Behar was biased against Scientology. Four years after the article was published, in a case brought by an individual Scientologist defamed by Richard Behar, Federal Court Judge John E. Sprizzo told one of Time, Inc.'s attorneys: "... given the obvious bias and hostility he

[reporter Richard Behar] had toward the Church of Scientology... you would be better off if someone else had written this article.”

Time Inc.’s attorney did not dispute the judge’s assessment. The case settled after the judge’s observation and other evidence indicated neither truth nor legal technicalities could rescue Time, Inc. from Behar’s lies. As part of that settlement, *Time* published a correction of its statement concerning this Scientologist in their November 11, 1996, issue—a virtually unheard of admission of error by the magazine.

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All of this was far in the past. Today, the Church of Scientology has the means to fight biased reporting with our own publication of information. See the Media and Ethics section of the website for the Church of Scientology *Freedom Magazine* where the Church takes on hatchet jobs by major media outlets.  
[www.freedommag.org/media-and-ethics](http://www.freedommag.org/media-and-ethics)

Moreover, the Church of Scientology now has its own television channel, the Scientology Network (Channel 320 on DirecTV and online at [www.scientology.tv](http://www.scientology.tv)) where we no longer have to filter our story through the lens of a biased reporter and we no longer have to be the victims of multibillion-dollar publishing giants backed by pharmaceutical company money. We can and do tell our own story.

Reporters are deserving of the protection of your organization. They work in countries where their lives are at risk daily as a result of their reporting. Lawrence Wright and Richard Behar deliberately set out to write one-sided and biased hatchet jobs and were well-funded in the process. The Church did not sit back idly. Freedom of expression is our right, too.

If you have any additional questions for your story, please let me know.

Regards,



Karin Pouw  
Public Affairs Director