

Attention - Assignment Editor

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**A STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY**

Sgt. Wayne Andrews of the Clearwater Police department planted a false story in the Tampa Tribune for the express purpose of creating hate and prejudice against the Church of Scientology. It was done on a Friday afternoon making it difficult for the Church to assemble its proof that the charges are false and the police motivation was to create prejudice.

This is the latest episode in a 20-year history of police discrimination against the Church, a prejudicial pattern that has been confirmed and condemned by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals as unconstitutional.

Sgt Andrews has now taken police misconduct to a new low by using the unfortunate death of a church parishioner as a tool for inspiring hatred and bias against Scientologists.

On Friday, December 13, 1996, Robert Johnson, the Church's general counsel in Clearwater, received a call from a Tampa Tribune reporter who said she had obtained the medical examiner's report concerning the November 1995 death of

Concerned about how any medical examiner report had been released, Johnson contacted Sgt. Andrews who acted shocked, claimed innocence and blamed the leak on the Medical Examiner's Office.

Later, right before the deadline for the story to be filed, the Tribune reporter confirmed that it was Andrews himself who was the primary source of the false allegations and innuendo that found their way into the article.

The facts are as follows.

had been staying at the Fort Harrison

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hotel after a traumatic car accident. During her stay, she suddenly took ill. After her initial reluctance was overcome, she was driven to see the physician of her choice, but died enroute.

Investigation by the Clearwater Police concluded in early 1996 with a determination that the cause of death was a pulmonary embolism exacerbated by a severe staphylococcus infection.

Notwithstanding that finding, the Clearwater police department spent the next 6 months harassing the Church of Scientology and Scientology parishioners with lengthy interrogations. Despite the history of police mistreatment, the Church fully cooperated providing every witness the police requested to speak to and allowing the police full access to Church premises for inspection.

Sgt Andrews, who was newly assigned to the investigation, called Church counsel in October, 1996 and made abusive, accusatory demands for additional interviews. Specifically he demanded that the Church immediately produce 35 former staff members whom he knew had long-since left Church staff and moved back to their homes overseas.

It was pointed out to Sgt Andrews that only one of the three had been in a position to have any relevant information, and that she had already been interviewed by the original investigating detective.

Andrews response was to threaten that he would start a "noisy" investigation that would involve the press.

Three days later, Tampa Tribune reporter Cheryl Waldrip called Church counsel, outlining a litany of outrageous allegations and a bizarre interpretation of the illegally released Medical Examiner's report.

After Andrews then told Church counsel Johnson that he was "shocked" by the reporter's information, and that he didn't know anything about the content of the story, and subsequently Ms. Waldrip revealed to the Church that Sgt Andrews was her primary source, it became clear that Andrews was making good his threat to use the media to carry out his campaign of abuse.

Just as shocking were the lengths Andrews and Clearwater police spokesman ~~George~~ Shelor went to paint a false and scandalous picture of the Church in the press.

Shelor's assertion that the Police department believes did not die of natural causes is both false and irresponsible. Even the incomplete autopsy report that

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was improperly released states that she died of natural causes. We had no control over the autopsy which was totally directed by the Medical Examiner. Further, the body would not have been released for cremation had there been any further questions.

The article states that the authorities had "no indication" any toxicology study had been done on confirming the presence of a deadly staphylococcus infection. This is untrue. That evidence was collected by the Clearwater police and has sat in their own files for over a year.

The real mystery here is how Andrews managed to ensure that the toxicological study did not make its way to the Medical Examiner. Yet, Andrews' predecessor indicated a year earlier that this report removed the "mystery" element from the investigation for him.

Andrews is quoted as saying that there is no indication what occurred during 2 week stay at the Fort Harrison. That is a bald faced lie. There are hours and hours of interviews with Church members detailing exactly what occurred during stay at the hotel. Nothing in those interviews is the least bit sinister or mysterious, despite Andrews' attempts to imply otherwise.

The article also contained falsehoods, embraced by Andrews, based on the assertions of former Scientologist, expelled for ethical misconduct whose last personal experience with any Scientology Church was 15 years ago. Yet the words and deeds of dozens of law-abiding, ethical Scientologists were ignored. One such allegation was that of a "baby watch" consisting of solitary confinement. In the 55 million words of Scientology scripture, the words "baby watch" do not appear, nor does anything even remotely resembling the "confinement" alleged.

Another false allegation is that was intending to leave Scientology. Dozens of Scientologists interviewed by the CWPd stated was a devoted Scientologist. In fact, was fundraising for the Church's annual Winter Wonderland in November 1995, the very time the article claims she was planning to leave the Church.

Equally false is Andrew's claim that Church members sat in on psychiatric release interview at a local hospital. saw a psychiatric nurse alone, a fact confirmed by a number of witnesses. We have no idea what was said or even what may have been done to during that interview.

Inventing falsehoods and disregarding the statements

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of a panoply of witnesses, simply because they are Scientologists is typical of the Clearwater Police Department's animus and prejudice. A Scientologist is a non-citizen in their eyes.

The only mysteries now surrounding the death of are why Sgt Andrews is violating the law and the constitution to smear a religion, and how blatant must police misconduct be to provoke an investigation of the wrongdoers?

We intend to resolve those mysteries utilizing the appropriate law enforcement, civil rights and oversight bodies.

Andrews and Shelor have slandered the Church, abused their authority, lied to the media and public, and prevented the people who loved and miss her from finding the peace of mind to which they are entitled. Their wild and false allegations are unconscionable and an outrage.

The Church's position is this. was a  
member and she was loved by many Scientology parishioners. In her time of need, Scientologists took the time to help her. She was one of us. For the Clearwater Police, who have a 20 year history of harassment, to now create further harassment against the Church by pretending that they care about a passed scientologist is disingenuous and a bald faced lie. They didnt care about her when she was alive and they certainly dont care about her when she is dead other than to use her unfortunate death to attack her religion.

All questions concerning her death should have been resolved by the medical examiner hours after her passing, and to our knowledge they were. Andrews and Shelor's allegations are grotesque in light of the fact that the police direct the actions of the medical examiner. If there were any doubt remaining, it would be naive to presume that it was attributable to sloppiness or mere error, in light of the documented history of harassment against the Church by the CWP. Any such "doubt" is a fiction deliberately created to have an excuse to continue an investigation that should have been concluded more than a year ago.

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