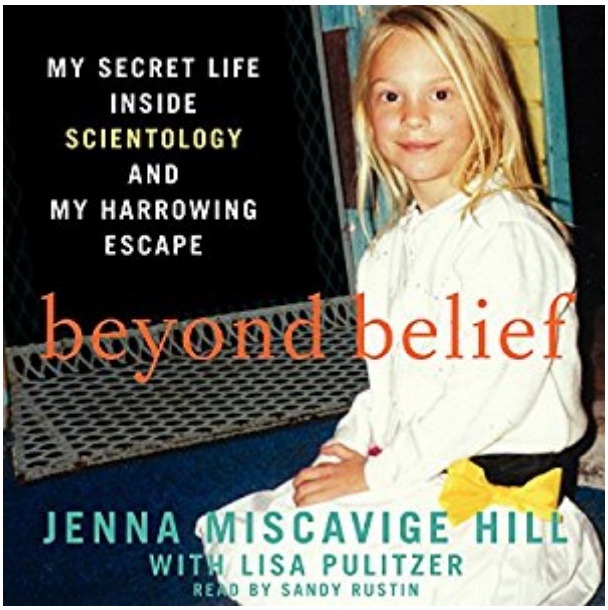
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Beyond Belief: My Secret Life Inside Scientology And My Harrowing Escape



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Synopsis

Audie Award Finalist, Non-Fiction, 2014 Jenna Miscavige Hill, niece of Church of Scientology leader David Miscavige, was raised as a Scientologist but left the controversial religion in 2005. In Beyond Belief, she shares her true story of life inside the upper ranks of the sect, details her experiences as a member Sea Org - the church's highest ministry - speaks of her "disconnection" from family outside of the organization, and tells the story of her ultimate escape. In this tell-all memoir, Jenna Miscavige Hill, a prominent critic of Scientology who now helps others leave the organization, offers an insider's profile of the beliefs, rituals, and secrets of the religion that has captured the fascination of millions, including some of Hollywood's brightest stars such as Tom Cruise and John Travolta.

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Customer Reviews

I eagerly awaited the publication of this book, ticking off the days on my calendar until the February 5th release date. Why? Because a story from a niece of the leader of the Church of Scientology, David Miscavige, was too good to ignore. While there are numerous books written by high-ranking defectors from the clutches of Scientology, the story of a blood relative of "COB" is unique. And thus, with much expectation, I read this memoir.StoryJenna Miscavige Hill, the niece of David Miscavige, was born February 1, 1984, and became a member of the third generation of a family of Scientologists. When she was four her parents gave up their lives as "public Scientologists" and traveled to Los Angeles to join the Sea Org. Since her parents were upper-echelon members of the church, Jenna was raised at the Ranch, a facility where the children of high-ranking Scientologists

live. As you can imagine, Jenna did not see her parents often, but as she had no outside experience, this was not odd to her. Nor was signing a Billion-Year Contract to join the Sea Org herself at the young age of 6 viewed as odd. In her own words, she wanted to make her parents proud.What follows is the story of a woman who saw the inner machinations of the church. Her parents arrived in LA shortly before L. Ron Hubbard died, and while young, she witnessed the rise of her Uncle Dave as the leader of the Church of Scientology. Jenna describes the rigid lifestyle of Sea Org members, detailing the grueling work schedules and harsh punishments for mistakes.Ultimately Jenna comes to see Scientology as many others do: a cult that has the power to destroy lives. This eventually leads to Jenna fleeing from Scientology, dodging security guards who would forcibly return her to the base, and making the brave decision to publish a tell-all memoir. It should be noted that in the beginning of the book Jenna specifically points out that there are many aliases used for people within her book; she even takes the unusual step of listing which names are aliases. While nice, I never really found myself cross-checking that list against the name of a new person introduced in the text.Should I Buy It?This book is very well-written and done in a style as to be engaging and very informative. Jenna's writing style is descriptive and to-the-point, without beleaguering the reader with long-winded explanations. She also takes the time to explain various aspects of Scientology so that the lay person would understand: Scientology is a very insular "religion" with its own terminology for many aspects of its faith. Nearly every building or personnel title is abbreviated by initials, and Jenna takes the time to explain what each one means so that the reader will not be confused. Her writing is very intelligent and witty, dotted with personal reflections of the situations that she relates. So calm is her delivery that you are amazed, even as she tells stories of cruel punishments and abuses in the higher levels of the church.While there are many books from defectors of Scientology, this one ranks as special due to the simple fact that this was written by a close blood relative of "COB, RTC", David Miscavige. It is one thing for a high-ranking member to defect and release a tell-all memoir, quite another when a high-ranking relative of the head of the church does so. This is not to say that other books out there are not worth the time nor are they less honest, it simply means that you know things have to be pretty ugly for someone who could benefit from nepotism to run away!The Bottom LineWhether you are new to the study of Scientology's defectors or this book is adding to your collection, you will find it educational and very well-written. The Church has already blasted the contents as spurious, which is not new (their legal tactics and creed to pursue detractors and trash them is well-documented church dogma). The passion that Jenna had toward Scientology and her break from it is a story that is sad: it was all that she knew, and for her to see Scientology in a light other than positive is shocking within itself.

Combine that with the Scientology practice of "disconnection", wherein she is labelled a Suppressive Person and active Scientologists are prohibited from speaking with her, and her courage is all the more amazing. Disconnection doesn't just stop at friends and co-workers. It extends to your family: and her family is deeply entrenched within Scientology. As mentioned prior, she was a third-generation Scientologist. Her Uncle rose to the top of the organization: her leaving the Church of Scientology (both literally and figuratively) disconnected her with all that she has ever known.And then she took the time to write about it. That is courage.If you want an in-depth look at the Church's machinations and want to know what drove the niece of the leader to flee, get a copy of this book. You will not be disappointed.

I am not now, nor have I ever been, a scientologist. My interest in books such as JennaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s stems from the fact that I live in Clearwater, FL (ScientologyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Mecca ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ or whatever the heck they call it). For most of us Clearwater residents, we barely notice the CultÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s presence. If you live outside of Downtown Clearwater, you will rarely if ever see a Cult member. (IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m fairly certain theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re not allowed to go to the beach either ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ at least not in uniform ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve never seen any there in my 20 years of living here. Bummer for them). While most of us accept the fact that our Downtown has been destroyed by the Cult and abandoned by pretty much everyone else, many of us do feel sad that there is absolutely no reason to stop there on the drive between our homes and our beautiful beach. Although they claim to be huge, with millions of members, we on the ground here can tell you that their buildings occupy a few city blocks, and their actual cult members do not appear large in number. The average tourist to our beaches would have no knowledge of their existence, as the drive down 60 from TIA to the beach would not in any way reveal their presence.That said, their presence here still irritates me, hence my purchasing JennaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book (and others like it). Each time I read one of these ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“escape from the cultÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• books, I feel ashamed of our local child protective services. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m saddened that my cityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s law enforcement has no balls when it comes to the cult.JennaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s experience, like that of most children within the confines of the Cult, is hard for me to fathom. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll never understand people like JennaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s parents, who happily sacrifice their children to a life of labor and servitude, in order to further the CultÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s agenda. An agenda which, is clearly about nothing more than making money. Scientologists can say whatever they want, but the fact of the matter is, they collect copious

amounts of money from their members and then fail to do anything but buy buildings (which largely remain unoccupied) and put it in what must be HUGE bank accounts. I imagine all of those bank accounts are off-shore. They pretend to do good works for the community, but they do not. They have no charities, no food banks, no help for the homeless population, no nothing. How is that a religion? They donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t even do anything for their own members. They just drive them into bankruptcy.The main takeaway from this book, for me, is reinforcement that the Cult is deadly to families. The practice of disconnection and declaring people ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“SPÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢sÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• and whatnot destroys family bonds. Kids growing up in the cult rarely get to experience true family bonding, and they know almost nothing of creating life-long friendships. Even if I felt compelled to let them have their beliefs and go about their business, I could never ignore the abuse they heap on their helpless off-spring.A corrupt organization that forces its members to escape under fear of capture is the furthest thing from ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“religionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• in my estimation. I wish Jenna and her family well, and I am happy to know that she now feels the joy of true family. I hope her book helps others to escape, and I hope books like these, the various websites and Anonymous continue to keep our local residents here inoculated from the CultÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s grasp.

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