

Declaration of Freewinds' architect, Lawrence Woodcraft

Presented by Bob Minton

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Many of you may know that the Freewinds is the only place where Scientologists can get the super-secret OT VIII level. Other courses and auditing are also delivered on this ship, at prices much higher than anywhere else. It is a frequent holiday destination for public Scientologists anxious to limit their exposure to "entheta" in the real world. Because the Freewinds sails in international waters and is therefore outside the reach of any country's law enforcement, there is also reportedly a highly secret RPF on the ship, where Scientology's most high-level and legally dangerous defectors are sent for re-indoctrination. Some of the people who have been there in recent years have reportedly included Marty Rathbun, Ray Mithoff, Lyman Spurlock, Norman Starkey, and Mike Rinder, to name but a few.

A licensed architect, Lawrence Woodcraft was assigned to prepare detailed plans for remodeling the interior cabins and other spaces on the Freewinds following its purchase by Scientology in 1987. Shortly after arriving on the ship, he noticed a powdery blue fibrous substance under a layer of paint. Upon closer inspection, he recognized it to be "blue" asbestos, the most dangerous form of this carcinogen. Lawrence has written a sworn Declaration concerning this discovery, his attempts to alert Sea Org officers (including David Miscavige's sister-in-law Bitty Miscavige) about the problem, and their refusal to remove it.

The Lisa McPherson Trust encourages everyone to read this Declaration, especially Scientologists who have been exposed to this potentially deadly substance on the Freewinds. We urge those Scientologists to seek real medical advice from qualified doctors regarding the long-term impact of contact with such a deadly toxic substance as "blue" asbestos. We would especially like to thank Lawrence Woodcraft for blowing the whistle on Scientology's utter contempt for the well-being of people who have worked on and visited the Freewinds.

Bob Minton

Chairman, LMT

DECLARATION OF LAWRENCE WOODCRAFT

1. I am over the age of 18 years.
2. The statements herein are of my own personal knowledge and if called upon as a witness, I can testify competently thereto.
3. My name is Lawrence Woodcraft. I am a citizen of the United Kingdom and a legal permanent resident of the United States of America. I am a former member of the Sea Organization of the church of scientology.
4. I joined the Sea Organization at the Flag Land Base in Clearwater, Florida in September

1986. Prior to this I was an architect in London, England from 1975 onwards.

5. In February 1987 the Sea Organization asked me to work on a project for them. They had purchased a Cruise ship formerly called La Boheme and owned by Commodore Cruise Lines. They renamed this ship Freewinds and Majestic Cruise Lines operated it for the Church of Scientology.

6. I was asked to go to this cruise ship and prepare detailed plans for remodeling the interior cabins and other spaces of the ship. The church's interior designers had prepared sketches of how they wanted the new designs to be. Now they needed detailed plans for actual construction. The plans were ambitious: They wanted to convert a restaurant space into course rooms for the delivery of OT8 and to convert a lounge area into a restaurant. All of the cabins were to be upgraded and in some cases two or more cabins brought together to make suites. Some cabins were converted into offices for the IAS (International Association of Scientologists). In short, every space of the ship was to be converted or remodeled in some way.

7. I flew to the ship, which was moored in great secrecy at the island of Curacao in the Caribbean. It was explained to me that the ship was in a secret location and would never be brought into United States territory because it could be seized by the authorities against taxes the Church owed the IRS. At this time there were probably about 100 Sea Org members aboard working on upgrading the crew living accommodations, carrying out repairs to the ship, training in seamanship, etc. I was in the company of Steve Kasaki who was called the Renos I.C. (in charge), although he didn't have any qualifications or any special knowledge of ships. I was to be the ship's architect.

8. One day Steve and I went into one of the cabins, which were in decrepit condition, and he took a hammer and removed a section of paint from the outer steel wall, as he was curious about the construction. Under the layer of paint I noticed a powdery blue fibrous substance approximately 1 ½" thick between the paint and the steel wall. I told him I thought it was asbestos, which is a hazardous substance, and the fibers must not be allowed to go airborne. Steve said that he didn't think it was asbestos and it wasn't dangerous.

9. In architecture school in the UK (University of Nottingham), I had attended lectures on the hazards of asbestos. We had been trained that prior to 1970 or thereabouts, asbestos was commonly used in buildings as insulation and fire protection. It was then declared a carcinogenic substance, to the degree that a single microscopic particle was like a little hook that would be breathed in, and hook itself into the lining of the lungs. There, a single microscopic particle could remain lodged for even 20 years, and then in the right conditions, cause lung cancer. We were taught that there was no safe exposure level; any exposure was potentially lethal. We were taught that asbestos could be present in ceiling tiles, floor covering, roof tiles, heating and pipe insulation. We were taught how to recognize it and that if discovered in an old building, a specialized abatement company would have to be brought in. Such a company wears full-body protective respirators, fully seal off the building with plastic sheets, remove the asbestos in special containers and take it to hazardous materials dumps. In short it was to be treated as seriously as if it was radioactive. To knowingly release asbestos into the atmosphere is a criminal offense in the UK as it is in the USA. I remember being taught that there are two types of asbestos, white asbestos, which might be added to ceiling tiles as a kind of "binder" or used to wrap pipes; and "blue" asbestos, the most dangerous kind. This is pure 100% asbestos commonly colored a bright blue color. Microscopically, if white asbestos is a single hook, blue asbestos is a ball of hooks so the

chance of it attaching itself to the lining of the lung is much greater. I remember that they discovered blue asbestos in railway carriages in England and it was a big "flap." The carriages were taken out of service and specially disposed of.

10. Back to the Freewinds. I went into the engine room, saw a section where ceiling panels had been removed, and saw a big chunk of blue asbestos hanging down. I went to the Chief Engineer and said there is exposed asbestos in the engine room. He said that it was not asbestos. Here, I did some research. The Freewinds was built in Finland in 1968. On board were the original plans from the shipyard. I went through the plans. Even though the notations were in Finnish, I saw the word asbestos over and over. The ship was divided vertically into fire compartments with steel walls that ran the full height of the ship. They were lined both sides with 2-3 inches of blue asbestos. The underside of every deck was lined in asbestos. The outside walls of the ship had been sprayed with asbestos. All the ceiling panels contained asbestos. In short, asbestos was everywhere as was typical of a ship built in the sixties. I read that the SS United States, which I remember operating between South Hampton, England and New York in the sixties, contained so much asbestos that it was impossible to scrap it even though it contained thousands of tons of valuable steel. The process of scrapping it would have released asbestos into the air, which was a criminal offense with jail time and massive fines and the prospect of civil litigation. It occurred to me that you do not see old cruise ships in service, you only see new cruise ships in service, built after the seventies when the true dangers of asbestos were realized by medical research.

11. No one on the ship knew anything about asbestos, nor did they care. I thought to myself, the Church has been tricked into buying a cruise ship for \$11 million that is a total liability, that is so full of lethal asbestos, the only option is to sink it in deep water. If asbestos remains permanently wet it is not dangerous, it is dangerous when dried out and flaking, releasing fibers in the air that are then breathed in. To me this seemed a daunting, enormous problem. How could the church possibly bring their public parishioners to this ship and expose them to such a hazardous substance. I thought that the legal liability alone would terrify them (As a new Sea Org. member I didn't know at this time the scientologists cannot sue the Church). Around this time Bitty Miscavage visited the ship. She was the Church executive with overall responsibility for the ship project. I went to her and took copies of the ships blueprints and showed her the full extent of asbestos on the ship. At first she was calm, but as I further explained the dangers, she began to realize that it was a problem. We had a meeting to discuss the problem of asbestos. Steve Kisacky stated that L. Ron Hubbard doesn't state in policy that asbestos is dangerous; he only states that fiberglass is dangerous and therefore we are only removing the fiberglass. In fact, the dock next to the Freewinds was piled high with fiberglass that had been removed by Sea Org members. It was explained to me that the ship was being remodeled only according to the written policies and "advices" of L. Ron Hubbard. Since Hubbard had been in the US Navy and had then founded the Sea Org and had run a fleet of ships, he knew everything about ships. If asbestos was dangerous, he would have written this somewhere. Also Hubbard knew everything about cancer. He had written that cancer was caused by the mind and specifically second dynamic aberration (problems with relationships). I was told that people only get sick if they go into "agreement" with being sick. As the ship was going to be filled with "operating thetans" doing the highest level in Scientology (OT 8) nothing was going to make them sick. I was being a "wog" (non-scientologist) worrying about a little thing like asbestos.

12. I forgot about the asbestos, even though this went against my education, and the renovation work got fully underway. Ceiling panels were removed; the asbestos was scraped away to make room for new electrical wiring and new air-conditioning ducts. The ship was

so old that salt water from the ocean was used to flush the toilets. The salt water had corroded the pipes and so leaks were everywhere. All the pipes were replaced and as the old pipes were torn out, the steel walls coated with asbestos were drilled into and cut through by Sea Org members. Holes were cut through the steel decks, sections of the vertical fire compartmental walls were removed to make way for relocating restaurants etc. etc. Asbestos was everywhere blowing around the ship like an insidious blue dust of death. It was piled up in the corridors, big chunks of it lie on the floor. I was freaked out and would wear a mask, but I know that a disposable facemask did nothing, because people who handle asbestos wear full body suits and actual respirators.

13. It reached a point that the renovation work was falling behind, and was beyond the scope of Sea Org members on the ship. The ship contracted with a ship refit company out of Southampton England, who commonly worked on cruise ships in Miami. The company sent about 40 carpenters and other workers to the ship from Miami. I had prepared the plans and materials were airfreighted from Miami or even obtained locally on the Island.

14. When the re-fit company arrived (they were non-Scientologists), they saw the asbestos everywhere and had a fit. They threatened to immediately pull their men off the project. There was in Scientology what is called a PR (public relations) flap. The re-fit company boss said it was dangerous and he couldn't expose his men to it. So that the re-fit company could fulfill their contract, a handling was worked out. An asbestos team was formed using Sea Org members (3 or 4). Wherever there was exposed asbestos they would rush to the location and spray it with water and or paint. The idea was that the asbestos shouldn't be dry and flaking and therefore releasing airborne contamination. This was an extremely poor handling and the ship refit contractors were very unhappy; they would even sleep in their cabins wearing masks. After a few weeks, they left the ship. I think in addition to the asbestos problem, the Church had run out of money to pay them. They left the ship in Oct. 1987 and went back to the UK with a very low opinion of Scientology.

15. Now, the church decided to employ Scientologists who were carpenters, metal workers and from allied professions. They had full room and board on the ship and were paid \$800 per week for working on the remodeling. Approximately 80 or 90 such Scientologists were brought to the ship and so employed. As they were Scientologists, they were easy to control and the asbestos problem was no longer an issue. They completed the remodeling by June 1988 for the Maiden Voyage. By the time the ship was finished, all the paneling was put back in place and the walls were painted and wallpapered, the floors were carpeted and new furniture was installed. It looked great, but behind the paneling, the asbestos was left hanging and flaking and falling apart. The ceiling panels were set in a metal grid system, which is a long way from being airtight. Every time a panel is removed for routine maintenance, asbestos dust is released into the rooms, cabins and corridors of the ship. This is continuing to this day. A ship at sea is subjected to intense vibration and so the already loosened asbestos becomes progressively looser and releases more airborne contamination.

16. I have now passed my architectural examinations and am a licensed architect in the State of California. The State takes asbestos very seriously and it is a criminal offense to release any amount of asbestos into the atmosphere. If any asbestos is suspected in an old building an abatement company has to be called and this is very expensive. I worked on a restaurant project remodel, as the architect and project manager, where ceiling tiles were removed in a shopping mall where a restaurant was located. The original steel frame had been coated with asbestos for fire protection. With the ceiling tiles removed asbestos dust filled the restaurant:

earthquakes had loosened the asbestos over the years. The EPA was called in and had special monitoring equipment to measure the level of asbestos in the air. They took air samples and sent it to a special laboratory for analysis. Then, a cleaning crew arrived from a licensed asbestos abatement company, wearing "space suits." They sealed off the entire area with plastic sheets and entered through air locks. Twenty men worked through the night and cleaned the entire restaurant, every last spoon, every plate, and every surface. Their bill was in excess of \$20,000 for one night. I would say that the magnitude of the problem on the Freewinds means that it cannot be solved without spending millions.

signed by Lawrence Woodcraft
Clearwater, Florida
January 24, 2001

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[Back to Lawrence Woodcraft](#)