As I knew him

By Thok Semdergaard, Denmark

13. March 1991 would have been the 80. birthday of LRH, if he had stayed in his body.

About his last years I have no personal knowledge and there are many differing stories in cir­culation about his condition.

What I can tell about is, when I met him and what he said to me.

In the year 1964 I was working in London for the Halas & Bachelor Cartoon Film Company, and in the place where I lived, I met a girl who told me about Scientology. I had never heard the word, but wanted to know what it was, so I went to a P.E. Course, an introductory lecture in the Fitzroy Street, and I was at once attracted by what I heard and bought the book: *The History of Man.* I read it the same night, and was deeply touched by it, because I recognized a lot of elements of similar things, that had happened to me during a very heavy period of what I thought was insanity. At that point in time I was working with film-animation. After having gone through several years of Psychoanalysis, I came to England and went into a heavy Key-In, and I had no explanation of all the weird pictures that was running through my mind in my attempts to understand what Time and Motion is.

After having gone to different Insane Asylums in England three times inside the same year, I managed to do 26 short animated films with a paper-dog chasing a bone. Snip and Snap Series.

Back in Danmark after having read *Dianetics; The Modern Science of Mental Health,* where the final words in the Prolog had made me cry of joy for several hours, I decided to write to the author L. Ron Hubbard.

The final words were: May you never be the same again! These words were for me the open­ing up of a new life, and I have never been the same since, thanks to Ron.

I wrote to Saint Hill and told Ron Hubbard, at that time titled Dr. Hubbard, that I would be interested in coming to Saint Hill and make animated films showing the basic principles of Dianetics and Scientology, and I got a nice letter back saying: 'Come as soon as you can'!

Of course, I came as soon as I could.

When I arrived at Saint Hill, in Jan 1966, I was shown to the office where I was supposed to work in the Audio Visio Department. It was the place where Ron kept all his Photographic Equipment, and I was put in charge of all that. It was overwhelming for me. The place was in the main building on the first floor, and the first day I went up the big front stairs in the Manor House and suddenly a door opened, and a man came out, violently deep red in his face and he was looking at me very fiercely, I did not understand the situation until much later. He asked me what I was doing there, and I went up to him and shook his hand and told him, that I was the person, that was going to do films for him and that I was very glad to meet him.

He looked calmer and spoke very friendly to me and said I was welcome, but I was not to use these stairs to get to my working room, I was to use the backstairs elevator, that went up past the bedroom of Mary Sue, so as not to disturb him. Every morning Mary Sue's little Corgi dog started barking when I tried as silently as possible to sneak by.

Later I understood that I had interrupted Ron in one of his research sessions, where he apparently was in the middle of something heavy. It made a very strong impression on me and I have not forgotten that picture.

I knew very little about the subject, at that time, so my mind was putting all kind of weird explanations to the situation.

I made a 16 mm animated film about Affinity, the plan was, that I should make several small films, a long series starting with Affinity, Reality, Communication and Understanding, then a series of films about TR's, all films were to give basic education in Scientology. At that time I also made animated titles for the Clearing Course Films, which some of you were shown while you were doing the Clearing Course.

I did not manage to do very much in the Film department, because at that time I was a confused and mixed-up person. I had no idea about who or what I was. This has later improved quite a lot, thanks to auditing and study of Scientology.

When Ron came back from Rhodesia, I managed to take a little bit of 16 mm film, he was received at Victoria Station in London, and later same day, when he came out, and said Hello to the crowd, that had collected in front of the Manor House, I took a whole roll of pictures of him. When I sent them to him by putting them into his In-basket, he sent me a note asking, what kind of lens I had been using. I informed him that it was a 54 mm lens. He then answered me saying, that he was not to be photographed with a 54 mm lens, because it gave a slight distortion to the portrait. A difference that my eyes were not able to distinguish. So I kept all these dias to myself and they are sitting around somewhere. I don’t know where they are now.

When the Sea Org started, I went along on the first ship from Hull down to the Canary Islands, and there we were sitting on the slipway while the *'Awn River',* later called *'Athena',* was con­verted and redone before we sailed into the Mediterranean.

While we, the crew, consisting only of people that newly had gone Clear, was helping rebuild and paint the ship, Ron came on board every day. He was living in a neighbouring village in a rented house.

During that time, I had the opportunity to experience Ron in his personal relationship with Mary Sue.

I will put no interpretation of what I saw and heard; I will just tell it as well as I recall it.

Ron had ordered a certain white paint for his cabin, and when it was painted, he did not like it, so the paint was removed and the walls repainted, he did not like that either, it had a wrong smell, in fact he was very difficult to satisfy, and he had a great argument with Mary Sue about the paint, and was giving her a lot of rough language, and I was horrified by listening to the way he scolded her.

One day I was walking around feeling very low toned, I felt awful, and Ron met me as I came up from the tween decks. He said: ' What's the matter Thok. I said: 1 don't know.' Then he looked me straight into the eyes, and what he said, made the whole silly mess in my head go away and started me laughing and cogniting for a long time. He said: 1 should like to indicate, that it is something, that you don't know!'.

Another little interesting interlude: I was First Mate on the ship, having been promoted from Bosun, which was my job on the voyage down to Las Palmas. As First Mate I had to check the pur­chase orders for the material and the work that had to be done, and I had OK'ed a hood over the stove in the galley, without checking properly whether it would be the right thing. Later it turned out to be the wrong thing for the purpose. I met Ron on the deck a few days later, he stopped me and said: 'It saved your neck, that I had put my OK on it too!'. And he laughed.

The thing that I at the time found most surprising and confusing about LRH as we called him then, was that he changed his mind about things so often. I did not understand then that this is a very high ability. In fact, it is one of the most powerful processes, if you can do it

'Whatever is bothering you, change your mind about it!'