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November 25, 2006

[Gene Scott: God's Angriest Man](#)

Filed under: [cover stories](#), [News and politics](#), [OC Weekly](#), [Weird](#) — gregstacy @ 8:46 am

(OC WEEKLY cover story, reprinted on the occasion of Gene Scott's death, February 24, 2005)

One night a few months ago, I was flipping the TV dial when I came across an unforgettable scene unfolding in the sprawling back yard of a Pasadena mansion. Three flawless, buxom young lovelies were doing some very professional-looking bumping and grinding to the accompaniment of the Eagles' "Heartache Tonight" while a well-groomed old man watched impassively from a chair. There was a phone number at the bottom of the screen, and every now and then, an announcer's voice drifted in, urging me to call. The camera stayed locked on the women for several long, head-spinning minutes, and the more I watched, the more disconcerted I became.

What the hell was this?

Finally, the song ended and the show cut away to a studio, where the old man was sitting in extreme closeup before an out-of-focus, pale-blue backdrop. "Now that you've seen what I got waitin' for me at home," he said, sparking up a fat stogy with a pistol-shaped lighter, "you should all be extra nice to me for comin' down here to talk to ya."

I finally recognized the old man, sort of. He's Dr. Gene Scott, the TV preacher who owns that red neon sign in downtown L.A. that says JESUS SAVES in letters so big you could probably read it from outer space. For as long as I can remember, he's been on TV, seemingly 24 hours a day, talking about Jesus in a surly Southern drawl while wearing two pairs of glasses at once and various eye-catching hats—a sombrero, for instance, or a collegiate mortarboard, or a king's crown. The few times I had actually tried to listen to what he had to say, I'd quickly gotten bored and given up. I certainly wasn't bored now. Instead of offering an explanation for what a squad of dirty-dancing bimbos was doing in the middle of a religious broadcast, the uncharacteristically hatless Scott plunged right into berating his flock for not sending enough cash. Soon he was so furious that he couldn't continue, and, with a mighty puff on his cigar, he vanished in a cloud of smoke.

We were then treated to footage of Scott's girlies riding some beautiful, high-class show horses

around a track at a place an onscreen caption identified as the Silver Oaks Ranch. This was just too much, so I called the show's 800 number and demanded to know what was going on. The operator just laughed good-naturedly, like I was a child asking why the sky is blue. "Dr. Scott has some beautiful horses," he told me, "so why shouldn't he have some beautiful ladies around?"

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I got very little out of him (he even dodged my question of what happened to Scott's trademark hats). But before I hung up, the operator offered me some advice: "Just keep watching the show, and sooner or later, everything will become clear."

I followed his suggestion, but what I saw in the following weeks only raised new questions. The bimbo boogie sessions turned out to be a regular feature; night after night, I'd tune in just in time to catch a few minutes of his women jiggling themselves sore to tunes like "Addicted to Love," "Raspberry Beret" and, perhaps most memorably, a Dixieland version of "When the Saints Go Marching in." The good doc also escorted his lady friends to the Kentucky Derby and the International Stamp Collectors' expo, took endless bike rides with them, and, on at least one occasion, snuggled up in bed with them while he went through his mail on the air. There's none of that humble-barefoot-shepherd malarkey for Scott; this is one preacher man who likes livin' large. The amazing thing was that, for all the quality time he spent with such lovely ladies, he still seemed to be in a perpetually rotten mood.

The show freely mixed Scott's live performances with taped bits 5 or 10 (or more) years old, and it became apparent that, over the decades, the man has changed his look more often (and more drastically) than David Bowie. On one viewing, he was clean-cut, wearing the dark, conservative business suit of an insurance salesman; the next time, he sported the look of a decadent '70s rock star, with long blond hair, a floppy hat and a yellowish fur coat; other times, he'd wear a leather jacket and dark glasses or a tuxedo and a pith helmet. In the early days, he often paused midsermon to look at his studio audience and ask, "I'm not boring you, am I?" as if he actually cared. Today's Scott, by contrast, often barks, "Am I borin' ya?"—his tone making it clear that if anybody said yes, he would kick their ass. He was a moody, often fire-breathing tyrant on the air, taking a near-fiendish delight in abusing his cringing staff for even the smallest slip-up. Once, a cameraman accidentally jiggled the camera while Scott was giving us a tour of some of his fascinating oil paintings, and Scott became furious. "Don't move the camera until I TELL you to!" he barked. "I'm the director here. I'll show you what I WANT to show you, and then you can play with the camera all you want!"

The doctor went no easier on his flock. Once, when they weren't ponying up the dough to his satisfaction, Scott referred to them as "dumb, Christian quote-unquote assholes!" Another time, he warned them that unless they shaped up quick, God "might let you live this next year without Him so you can see the difference."

I couldn't imagine why people followed the man. His sermons were certainly far more compelling. He could, and often did, spend hours explaining how the King James Bible botched a particular word from the original Hebrew. He was also big on the sort of dodgy mystical material you used to see a lot on In Search Of, often reading aloud from highly questionable volumes on the legendary lost continent of Atlantis or expounding at length on his pet theory that angels built the pyramid at Giza (Jeez-uh, as he pronounced it). When he was in one of his rare jocular moods, he treated his followers to readings from joke books. Mostly, however, he just roared at people to send him money. And they did.

If I could have dismissed Scott as a charlatan, the whole thing might have ended there. But the man spoke of the Resurrection with such passion and at such length, day after day, that it seemed impossible for the whole thing to be just an act. Occasionally, the doctor would address some of the mysteries that plagued me: one time, he read a note from a viewer asking why he always had pretty women around him. His answer: "To keep the ugly ones off me." But it didn't take long for me to realize that watching the show most definitely would not answer all of my questions.

Eugene Scott was born Aug. 14, 1929, in Buhl, Idaho, to W.T. and Inez Leona Graves Scott, a traveling preacher and his teenage bride. In many ways, it was a childhood straight out of a Southern gothic novel. When Gene was still a child, his mother gave birth to premature twins, one of whom died within hours. A month later, Gene began to suffer from strange convulsions in the middle of the night, and his mother had a vision: she saw a stairway roll down from heaven and come right down beside her bed; then two angels descended and stopped in front of Gene. "Oh no, Lord," Leona cried out. "You can't take Gene." The angels heard her and picked up the remaining twin instead. Gene survived the night, but his brother didn't. The incident convinced Scott's parents that their son was bound for glory.

Soon after, the family moved to Gridley, California, where Gene's father agreed to head a church whose previous pastor had crucified himself on a tree. Young Gene was well-liked in town, and he excelled in school; in the seventh grade, he brought home a straight-A report card with a note from his teacher that read, "Do you know you have a genius for a son?" He played on his high school basketball team, although he took some guff from his dad's congregation for showing his legs in public.

When he came of age, he enrolled in the philosophy of education doctorate program at Stanford University, still somehow finding time in his hectic collegiate schedule to wed his high school sweetheart, Betty Ann Frazer, and work alongside his father at the Assemblies of God church on weekends. Soon, however, the pervasive secular skepticism of his Stanford peers rubbed off on him,

and he suffered a paralyzing spiritual crisis, although he re-discovered his faith before graduation. For his dissertation, he summed up his life's goal with a quote from the American Churchman Reinhold Niebuhr: to "descend from the anthill of scholastic hairsplitting to help regulate its common life and discipline, its ambitions and ideals."

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After earning his doctorate in 1957, Scott taught at a Bible college in the Midwest and helped Oral Roberts establish a university in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Although Scott speaks with a certain grudging admiration for Roberts today ("I believe that Oral believes he saw a 900-foot-tall Jesus . . ."), the tension that eventually caused them to part ways is also clear (" . . . I guess it takes 900 feet to convince him"). On his TV show, Scott often tells the story of the days he spent golfing with Roberts. Roberts was a sore winner, and every time he trounced young Scott on the green, he walked away, leaving the golf bags behind for Scott to carry. Finally, the day came when Scott won. He still cherishes the memory of strolling off and leaving his golf bag for a chastened Roberts.

Post-Roberts, Scott rose steadily through the ranks of the fundamentalist Christian Assemblies of God movement, resigning as a member in good standing in 1970 to found his own Oroville ministry with his father. In the early '70s, he was asked to take over the 45-year-old Faith Center Church in Glendale, a position that came with four broadcast stations and a \$3.5 million debt. Scott agreed to sign on as pastor, provided the church leaders resigned and he got complete control. He never seriously imagined the church would go for it, but they did. Scott went on the air in 1975, and although his show was a hit virtually from the start, his early years of broadcasting were personally trying. His 23-year marriage, perhaps unsurprisingly, crumbled almost immediately after he became a star (he calls his ex-wife "the Devil's Sister" and adds that if he goes to heaven and she's there, he'll move to another planet). In the '80s, Scott was hit by two financial disasters. His 1983 refusal to turn over his financial records for an FCC investigation cost the church three broadcast stations; four years later, the church lost a \$6.5 million deposit when Scott tried to renege on a deal to buy a historic Los Angeles church.

These blows could have destroyed Scott, but they only strengthened his resolve. After he lost the broadcast stations, he kept his show on the air by buying time on national TV and cable outlets. He also devised an ingenious system to keep the government out of his financial affairs by demanding that his followers "give without strings"—i.e., donate their cash without having any idea what it's going to be spent on. "The spirit of life goes to work for you . . . only if you give materially to me," Scott says. "You should give to me if I wanted to go out and buy a rock band or the Mustang Ranch."

He has survived his trials and prospered beyond belief. Today his program is available, by radio or television, all over the world, 24 hours a day. He lives in a mansion, consorts with beautiful women and owns classics of impressionist art. (He hangs his own paintings beside them, feeling that their beauty upgrades him; he claimed he keeps the women around for the same reason.) He races horses,

hunts, smokes and swears a blue streak, and his followers love him for it. He's even taken a dazzling bride 20 years his junior (and damn pretty on horseback), Christine F. Shaw. Many have sung his praises, from Tom Bradley to Buffy Saint Marie. Years ago, he achieved a pop-culture milestone when he was parodied (by Robin Williams, no less) on Saturday Night Live.

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Perhaps most intriguingly, he was even the subject of a documentary by Werner Herzog, the mad-genius director most famous in this country for his epic tale of obsession, *Fitzcarraldo*. When I discovered that the film existed, I had to see it. But the tale of the months that I spent looking for a copy could easily make another article. Suffice it to say that, in the end, I tracked down *God's Angry Man* at a wonderful place in L.A. called Mondo Video A-Go-Go. The fellow behind the counter explained that Scott was so incensed by the film that he threatened to sue, and it was pulled from circulation. The tape I got at Mondo was actually a grainy video of the film being projected on a screen. The sound was terrible, but because this was one of the few surviving copies, how could I complain? According to the guy at Mondo, the person in the tape who's watching the film being projected is none other than Dr. Scott himself. I'm not sure if that's true, but I like to pretend it is.

ME WATCHING DR. SCOTT WATCHING GOD'S ANGRY MAN

The film begins with Scott midtantrum, screaming himself purple at an unlucky studio engineer: "Give me the volume! When I yell, I wanna be heard! 'Cause I only yell when there's an occasion for yelling! [He turns, speaking to us.] God's honor is at stake every night. This is not a show; it's a feast! A feast of the faithing experience."

Later, we catch up with him in the back of a moving limo; he's beardless, blond and dressed like an undertaker. He reminds me of Dennis Hopper. He seems almost like a different man from the grizzled prophet I see on TV every night, but his eyes have the same chilly blue glow. He offers a few choice words for nosy reporters like me. "I kid the media," he says, "and say they worship the Great God Two-Sides, because if they went down on the beach to report on the sun comin' up, they'd add a line that there are some on the beach that say the sun didn't come up. . . . I have a conviction: if you know your subject, you cannot avoid coming to a conclusion."

As he speaks, I realize that despite the reams of material I've gathered on the man, I'm still nowhere near coming to a conclusion about him. Is he a fake? Is he a true believer? After all this time, how can I still not know? While I'm puzzling over that one, we're treated to a brief interview with Scott's parents (two sweet old folks who clearly think the world of their son) and a television segment where Scott counts the pledges as they roll in. It comes to a quarter of a million dollars in 16 minutes, a total Scott is content with. For now.

At this point, I'm pretty convinced he's a shyster, but the next segment finds him outlining his schedule: three to 10 hours of live television daily, two separate two-hour Sunday, board meetings, conventions, pastoring another church in northern California, visiting sick church members, writing and publishing religious texts, leading tours of the Holy Land, visiting an orphanage he supports, and more. It's a dizzying lineup, far more than any man could do purely to keep up appearances. I'm as confused as ever.

Then the film strikes an unexpectedly poignant note. Scott sits silently in his study for a long while, his face unreadable. "Let me tell ya what makes me happy," he begins. "Get me on a jet, [and fly me] 8,000 miles to a city where nobody knows me. I'd like to . . . just not have some life-or-death struggle."

For the first time in all the time I've been studying him, Scott looks lost. "I am too good to be really bad and too bad to be really good," he says. "I don't enjoy being the good guy, 'cause I'd rather do some hellish things. . . . My dream is to go somewhere where I can lay on the beach and read books and do my thing. . . . I dream of [going] to Australia and getting a college-professor job where nobody knows me, teach about Plato and go out back and hunt rocks. Now, that probably exaggerates it, but that's what I'd like, just to get away from this mess."

The film really comes to life in its final minutes, beginning with a scene taken from Scott's show. He is in closeup, his face a mask. "I will not be defeated tonight," he whispers. "Five phones are available, and one person has the key."

There's a nearly 30-second pause—it feels longer—until at last Scott speaks. "Not one more word tonight," he vows, "till that thousand comes in."

Then there are two minutes of some of the most agonizing silence I've ever experienced. At first, Scott just sits there, his eyes boring a hole into the viewer. After a long while, he oh-so-casually shuffles some note cards, but the tension is building by the second. Eventually, we cut to a big-haired operator in the studio, who is weeping beside her silent telephone. After a moment, the operator next to her begins to cry as well. They're tears of fear; the women know what's about to happen. Scott looks like he's going to explode at any second. Finally, he does.

"Do you understand that GOD's work hangs on 600 MISERABLE dollars?!" he roars. "And you SIT

there, GLUED to your chair! How long must I teach you the principles of spiritual warfare?! Thirty thousand means nothing now; GOD is being held up to an open shame! . . . It has with money . . . [and then aside] at this point.”

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He savors each word like William Shatner playing King Lear. “People who [sings] ‘I Surrender All’ will let GOD, for an HOUR, hang over PEANUTS!”

Overcome with disgust, he can scarcely continue. “The network oughta be SHUT DOWN,” he spits, “as Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, if God can’t find four people. What IS Christianity?! Games?! Gimmicks?! Words?! Massage?! [I must have rewound the tape five times for that one.] Or life and death?!”

Finally, his rage is so over-the-top that even he can barely keep a straight face. “Husbands and wives, if I was married to either one of you I’d get up and kick both of you. If you got somebody sleepin’, go jump in the middle of their gut. This is WAR. God’s honor is at stake!”

The money comes in at last, even more than Scott asked for, but by now, it’s too late to please God’s Angry Man. “We’re well over,” Scott screams, “after I YELLED at you. Why didn’t you do it ’cause you love GOD?”

With a growl, he throws a wad of paper at the camera and storms off, whether to go fume in his dressing room or laugh himself sore, I honestly can’t guess.

The next scene features Scott in his study, quietly and candidly discussing his utter lack of privacy. He says that for security reasons, he’s never, ever alone, and the only thing he owns that nobody else has access to is a zippered black bag he carries with him at all times. “I hope somebody thinks \$10 million in gold bars is there, for the simple dignity that there is something I don’t have to go naked about,” he says. “Maybe there’s dirty socks [in there]. I hope when I die . . . the government bureaucrats salivate themselves sick getting into this bag. [It] may be my memoirs. My simple dignity of privacy is restricted to that bag. That’s all I got.”

Forget the government bureaucrats; I’m salivating over that damn bag. What treasures does it contain? Perhaps the key to the man’s whole life—his Rosebud—is in there! My mind is reeling with the possibilities when I suddenly realize that Scott has just answered one of the interviewer’s questions

with a line I have to scribble down: “No man should be boss who wants to be a boss. He’ll abuse his authority.” The astonishing thing is that he sounds like he means it. Is this the same man who shrieks at his staff every night on the air?

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At the scene’s end, Scott talks about the pains of the life he’s created for himself driving him to tears on a weekly basis. The interviewer suggests that Scott must be a lonely man, which Scott almost simultaneously affirms and denies: “Oh yeah, sure. Who could I have as a friend? Every friend is a potential enemy until this job is finished . . . I guess I’m lonesome sometimes, but I’m more of a loner than lonesome. I don’t have any close friends, no. Yeah, I’m lonesome.”

There’s a long pause as Scott looks off camera at the interviewer. The shot holds for just a bit too long, and Scott starts to break into a sly grin. The shot holds, and the grin gets wider.

The film concludes with a bizarre scene from the era of Scott’s FCC troubles, the time of the FCC monkey band. In those days, when Scott was feeling particularly hassled by the government, he’d holler, “Bring me that monkey band!” and one of his helpers would hurriedly wind up a gang of piano-playing, cymbal-crashing toy monkeys, a bizarre toy-shop caricature of our government at work. The concerto usually ended with Scott taking up a bat and whacking the gears out of one of the band members. The scene is almost frighteningly odd, but Scott’s delight is infectious.

“You hit ‘em on the head, and all they do is squawk!” he cries. “Look at ‘em! There’s your bureaucrats! Wouldn’t you like to grow up and be a bureaucrat, if you’re a kid watchin’ this?! That’s our government for you! Haw haw haw!”

THE BLOB

Shortly after I saw God’s Angry Man, Scott’s nightly shows took an ugly turn. I watched for weeks, but I never managed to figure out exactly what happened; apparently, Scott discovered that one of the women in his employ had been saying unflattering things about him on the telephone. It never got any clearer than that, but for the next few weeks, Scott raged endlessly, hideously, against this woman in particular (“She was like a blob, expecting me to stuff food into her opening. Well, I don’t touch an opening like that!”) and all women in general (“God is the ultimate chauvinist . . . I’ve never met a woman who didn’t need a man to lead her around”). The incident brought out the beast in him, and soon Scott was enacting his own words about bosses who want to be bosses. “Hell, this ain’t a democracy” became his new favorite phrase. He began to spend his Sunday sermons screaming at his

congregation that he is literally a chosen one, selected by God before he was born to lead a select handful of followers, a “master race” in the fight against the forces of Satan. The absolutely will not ever talk back to the boss.

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“I don’t care what I do,” he told them more than once. “If you think it’s wrong, I don’t wanna hear about it. I do what I do because God wills it, and if you don’t like it, you can get the funk out.”

His flock sat silently through every rant, only piping up when he barked a question at them: “Am I boring you?” Of course, there could be only one answer.

SIT UP STRAIGHT AND NARROW

At 11 a.m. on a Sunday morning, I was outside the imposing University Cathedral in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. After repeated, unsuccessful calls to arrange an interview with Scott, I had given up and made a reservation to attend one of his services. I was greeted (intercepted, really) at the door by a doughy, smiling fellow who checked my name on the reservation list and then proceeded to brief me on the rules for the two-hour service: absolutely no talking, no wiggling in my seat, no getting up to go the bathroom. “We wouldn’t want to get Dr. Scott mad, now would we?” he said with a laugh.

I’m a shaggy creature, clearly out of my element, and I could tell my appearance made the man nervous. As he escorted me to my seat, I noted with a chuckle that I was in the next-to-last row, far away from the cameras.

The cathedral interior is a gorgeous, brassy, kitschy mess, a mix of the UA theater the place once was and the pulpit to the world it is now. They’ve hardly tried to hide the past; the drop curtain still says THE PICTURE’S THE THING and UA in giant, ornate letters. The crowd was an odd mix of blue and white collars, with a couple of girls floating around dressed like they were at a Cramps show.

It was well past the scheduled starting time when the curtain went up; but when it did, there was Scott on a stool, sharing the stage with a few musicians and a sports-bar-style big-screen TV. The crowd applauded thunderously for what must have been a full minute until Scott finally snapped at them to stop it already. The band immediately struck up and performed a few numbers, although I was disappointed that they didn’t do “Kill a Pissant for Jesus,” a song Scott’s been known to call for on

occasion. The musical interlude gave me a chance to inspect the enormous mural behind Scott. At first, I took it to be a religious scene of some kind, but it turned out to be a '30s-sounding bunch of cowpokes heading for the last roundup.

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After the third song, Scott came forward to speak. He wasn't far in, though, when he broke off to look ominously in my direction.

"I'm about to embarrass somebody in a minute, if they don't sit up."

There was dead silence all around me. I was slouching in my seat a little, but I was 25 rows back and in the dark. Could he possibly mean me?

"You sit up now, or I'll putcha in a wheelchair. I'm serious. I'd make no exceptions if my own mother was sitting here."

Everyone around me was now sitting up so straight I could practically hear their spines cracking. I briefly considered slouching over even further (getting thrown bodily out of the cathedral sure would have made a dramatic closing for this story, wouldn't it?), but I decided to play along. I sat up, and Scott launched into a bitter rant against reporters. I'm sure he wasn't talking about me, but it was one hell of a spooky coincidence.

From there, Scott mounted a fresh attack on the mysterious woman who had wronged him, pledging that, in the future, he would be more intolerant of dissent and more generally unlovable than ever. The crowd laughed and applauded wildly at that one, and while they were still recovering, Scott announced that it was "offering time." The words left me momentarily dumbfounded, until a bunch of men bearing red cloth sacks came bounding down the aisles and all of the churchgoers gave them cash. When the men got to me, I waved them away, and I could immediately sense waves of hostility emanating from the churchgoers around me. I stopped myself from slouching guiltily down in my seat just in the nick of time.

When Scott preaches at the cathedral, he works before a large, white board, writing in red and blue and green and black pens. He never erases; he simply writes over old words with darker pens. By morning's end, they make some interesting, Kandinsky-like patterns (for a time, the ever-entrepreneurial Scott sold the boards when he was done with them). The one drawback to the

system is that, after a while, the messages are virtually indecipherable; detail upon detail piles up until it becomes such a jumble that your brain starts to hurt. Eventually, my eyes glazed and my scant reasoning power I had left, I started trying to organize this article in my mind. It was impossible; I'd gathered enough material for a book about Scott, and more details were available, but I still had no clue about what makes him tick.

When I came out of my reverie, Scott was winding up a speech: "God doesn't like failure, and mankind, as it stands, is God's great failure. . . . I want the world to know its hate is returned."

HEAVEN CAN WAIT

When the service was over, I went upstairs and looked at Scott's world-renowned collection of Bibles. Some were on metal pages; some had pages as big as a car door. There were a few of Scott's books for sale, most of them transcripts from his TV sermons. His flock was all around me, looking at the merchandise with wide eyes. What did they see there? What was in it for them?

I didn't care anymore. I went downstairs and stepped outside. It had rained the day before, and all of a sudden, L.A. was beautiful. It felt good to get away from that dark room and free from God's Angry Man. I crossed the street to my car and drove through crowded downtown streets, glad as I rarely am to be alive in my own godless world.

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29 Comments »



I encountered Dr. Gene Scott while at college in the late 80's. I also never quite knew how to read him – a believer in religion or capitalism? As he ranted, smoked, talked up his beloved horses, I realized that part of the appeal was the way he would look off into the distance, as if suddenly remembering something important that his simple flock would never get. Disappointment, condescension, the pregnant pause, and the zoned-out revelations — I realized Dr. Gene Scott is a dead ringer for my father. The one that skirted my life for 20 years and spent most of his little time with me trying to think of something to say.

And that was why I watched Dr. Gene Scott. That and my resident advisor liked to be outraged

by him and then swear at the TV.

Comment by Laurie – March 1, 2007 @ [7:41 am](#) | [Reply](#)

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Thanks for the interesting comment, Laurie... that was one of my very first OC Weekly cover stories, and it's nice to know that all these years later somebody took the time to read it and think about it. You might be interested to know that I have a short, sequel article coming up soon in OC Weekly (sometime in early March, I'm told). This one is about Gene Scott's equally perplexing widow, Melissa Scott.

Comment by [gregstacy](#) – March 1, 2007 @ [11:48 am](#) | [Reply](#)



I watched Dr. Scott and became a King's Tither in the mid-80's. My husband at the time did not like that I would stay up sometimes 22 hours at a time watching, waiting....he never seemed to conclude anything – leaving me waiting for the “answer” to all his inquiries – the pyramids, the stars, Stonehenge, the Stone of Scone, the Lost Tribes – it was all very fascinating. I got divorced soon after I made a pledge of money we didn't have. It was the last straw for our marriage. I ended up in serious counseling.....and that is where I, too, discovered this man was so much like my father. . . it was so scary to realize the power he had over me – both my father and this fellow who mesmerized me. I regret putting so much of my life in their hands. I think he was an abusive man – just as my father was. I loved my dad, and he was a religious fanatic – just like Gene Scott. So many comparisons. I have not caught up with him until tonight. I was surprised to see he had married and divorced twice and left a “widow” – though she seems more the child he never had. I am not surprised he was involved with multiple young women and flaunted them, and his lavish life. He truly was like my father in so many ways. I have come to see my dad as a very confused, lonely and unfulfilled person, God rest his soul. I believe he is at peace now. And I pray Dr. Scott is too.

Thanks for the article – I look forward to the followup. I am curious to know what justification he gave for his second divorce. I recall Christine being so important to him. I even remember him saying he would never marry again. . . ?

I think he was confused and I think he became full of himself and abusive.

Nancy

Comment by Nancy – March 2, 2007 @ [8:56 am](#) | [Reply](#)



Thanks for a very interesting comment, Nancy. I wish I'd been able to talk to you for the

original story! It probably would've been improved by the perspective of somebody who was so drawn into Scott's world. I think it's remarkable that you eventually saw the religion in this case to look for a new dad. I think a lot of people do that, but I don't admit it to themselves.

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The follow-up story is much less involved, it's just a one page piece. But hopefully you'll find it interesting.

Comment by [gregstacy](#) — March 2, 2007 @ 9:28 am | [Reply](#)



he is not a bullshiter like so many so called preachers around these days..anybody with a passion like that will always understand what this person was like..you can't know him with the mind you have now..

Comment by [lidya](#) — June 12, 2007 @ 8:54 pm | [Reply](#)



Hi from New York And thanks for the web site. It was just the thing I had been looking for. It has helped me no end. Thanks again

Comment by [mgm grand sports book](#) — October 30, 2007 @ 9:28 am | [Reply](#)



Good story! It's amazing that I'm seeing it, what, nearly 10 years later? Anyhow, I know one of the FCC people Gene Scott railed against (by name) when the licenses for his stations were on the line. To this day, the guy, Phil Kane, has nothing good to say about Scott or his operation.

I think the key to understanding Gene Scott is understanding chutzpah. He made an outrageous offer to Faith Center ("Give me all the power and I'll get Faith Center out of bankruptcy"). He demanded of his followers that they obey him 100%, especially in the minor details such as not squirming, sitting up straight, etc.

It seems that a lot of humans prefer not to think for themselves. After all, after a long hard day of work and trying to make ends meet and hassles at home and what have you, it's easy to understand that a lot of people simply want to put decisions into someone else's hands. The key to this is that the more someone like a Gene Scott demands, the more people will give him.

Humans are social creatures and are usually more comfortable doing things in a group; and if the group leader makes everybody do the same thing, there is security there.

Does Melissa Scott have that kind of leadership style? I don't think so. She's just weird.

Comment by David Kaye — November 30, 2007 @ [10:49 am](#) | [Reply](#)



Thanks, David. It's particularly refreshing to get a comment that is NOT SPAM. (No reflection on Mr. MGM Grand Sportsbook up there.)

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Comment by Greg — December 1, 2007 @ [2:41 am](#) | [Reply](#)



I once had friend who I happen too mention Rev Gene antics. The next thing I know he's playing in his band and from that day on I could see the slow end of our friendship. Oh well nothing like Gene to turn confused into abused.

Comment by Jim Jason — December 29, 2007 @ [6:46 am](#) | [Reply](#)



Great article, Greg. I first encountered Dr. Scott on the tv in a motel room in Connecticut in 1979. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. On returning home to the SF Bay Area I found him on channel 38, and became addicted, particularly during the period when he tried to buy the old Jesus Saves church in downtown LA. That episode sealed my disgust, as he bludgeoned his followers into putting up millions for this folly. He would broadcast his sunday services from there and the camera shots of the audience got tighter and tighter, meaning only the first few rows were occupied. When it became obvious that he couldn't complete the purchase he invented this fiction about discovering some "covenant" on the property that prevented his form of teaching, and he tried to use that to back out of the deal, blaming the sellers for the thing falling apart. A true charlatan. Of course, he was extremely intelligent, entertaining, and enjoyed life to the fullest, all at the expense of his gullible followers, who I suppose also got something out of the deal. One interesting sidelight: during his battle with the FCC the scientologists fell all over themselves to help him out. The awful Heber Jentzsch used to show up on the set of Scott's show. But then Scott seemed to drop them. Now I've heard it alleged that Melissa is looking to scientology to bail her out of her financial difficulties. Any light you can shed on this?

Comment by PB — January 28, 2008 @ [6:19 am](#) | [Reply](#)



Very tasty tidbits you've left for me here. I want more. This guy still is in business, can you believe it?

I am absolutely fascinated with the continuing life ministry from the grave that Gene still beams to his followers. His widow's website refers to Gene as if he is still alive and implies that they are both ministering together.

I believe that Melissa used to be a porn-star. Is this common knowledge?

Anyway, I do not believe that any "ministry" is more bizarre or fascinating

However, Melissa seems to be running a close second. For entertainment value she is
greater.

I used to watch Gene. I live in Tulsa, OK. I was mesmerized by his vaudevillian irreverence for all those he hated, which seemed to be everybody, especially and ironically his followers. How bizarre.

I remember once feeling sorry for those folks that he was hammering in the audience until I sheepishly self-reflected and realized that I was one of them!

I laughed at myself when woke-up from that unforgettable moment when I had somehow had been hypnotized by Gene's rantings and for a nanno second was unsure about my beliefs. Was I wrong and did Gene know something I did not know? I was actually frightened to realize that for that short moment I had been successfully brain-washed by Gene.

Have you ever noticed just how uncannily familiar Gene's luring, ranting style is so reminiscent of Hitler's?

In your minds eye place them interchangeably into a Nazi rally speaking a language you don't recognize. Is it just me or didn't they both have the same hypnotic, jarring delivery and captivating, unholy condescension? No. Hitler was not my daddy.

Comment by Paul — February 9, 2008 @ [9:52 am](#) | [Reply](#)



12.

I just watched some of the Herzog video on Youtube and read this fascinating piece. Scott strikes me as an old fashioned sociopath, down to the tense uncertainty he generates in those who watch him. Seducing with fear alternating with relief at not being murdered by him, Scott baits his audience into a Stockholm syndrome attachment. The man is pure evil, but most are too afraid and mind-fucked by his antics to recognize the obvious — decent people don't habitually and continuously generate feelings of dread feelings in others — least of all in pursuit of good.

Comment by [Dr X](#) — February 26, 2008 @ [12:30 am](#) | [Reply](#)



13.

I.just.found.out.Dr.Scott.and.I.are.related..

Comment by [CarolynGraves-Parvinl](#) — June 3, 2008 @ [5:55 am](#) | [Reply](#)



14.

Have you published your follow-up article yet?

I would love to provide you with some leads.

I am an ex-member, thank God, and it seems that there must be a couple of good techno-geeks out there, because they keep deleting all this information that somebody else (I have a lot more time and freedom than me) had published at other sites. The information has all disappeared. I have copies, as do dozens of other ex-members.

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Thanks for speaking out.

Comment by ex member — July 8, 2008 @ [2:03 am](#) | [Reply](#)



15.

[...] wake up to discover Pastor Gene Scott beating his [...]

Pingback by [A Reason Not to Fall Asleep in Front of the Television « Pasadena Adjacent](#) — September 10, 2008 @ [11:41 pm](#) | [Reply](#)



16.

hi, My photos of my new emo hairstyle at <http://tinyurl.com/59ps64>

Comment by [emoboy](#) — October 24, 2008 @ [9:13 pm](#) | [Reply](#)



17.

Yes. Scott was just like my Dad too. Right down to the cigar and rapping about God. I was brought up with this. Thank God it did not turn me against religion. I discovered the Foundation of Human Understanding and was shown the way to the way, led to repentance and gotten the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to be led astray if you are one of the elect. They are not satisfied with anything but the REAL thing! Yet Scott was very entertaining. My Dad watched him jealously until he died. My Dad identified with him all right. Did the prostate cancer finally do Scott in? He said God cured him in 2002. Bet he was wrong. Prostate cancer takes about two years to kill.

Comment by [Kay Richards](#) — February 20, 2009 @ [10:18 am](#) | [Reply](#)



18.

Interesting. These are some of the most incisive and sober observations of Gene I have ever seen (a few of the comments, in particular, which get to the heart of the matter). They got me to thinking:

I remember in the 1982-1983 timeframe, when I discovered (whom I used to refer to on USENET as) "El Geno". He was quite interesting to me—and not for what he said, but rather how he said it rather differently from everyone else that claimed to be a Christian. I still think of

those days, and my discovery of Gene, rather fondly. I was pretty devoutly atheist at the time. I was raised an atheist, and am an atheist right now. However, I also spent 14 years as a Lutheran Minister, and became somewhat agnostic and tolerant during that time. Heck, I even attended church for years to listen to my wife preach and get a better understanding of church life. I think that phase of my life, from discovering Gene, all through that marriage (a marriage which really became possible only after having listened to Gene for a few years and having my mind opened up to the concept of dating a Christian woman), was one in which I became curious why and how people “fell” for religion. Years later, not long before I semi-amicably divorced my ex-wife, I asked her why people believe in god and go to church, and her response was quite candid: she said “some people need it, and (paraphrasing here) “when done properly, it is very beneficial and does no harm”. In retrospect, and after having observed her, and other professional ministers in the mainstream Lutheran church for a number of years (which I came to greatly respect and admire), I came to see that these people of the cloth are in positions that hold tremendous power over certain people, and in some cases they are not held to account for things they say and do. They can potentially get away with an awful lot. They are in positions that truly need to be held by responsible and sane people, and indeed that's what good seminaries are for. Ultimately, Gene was not a responsible pastor. He was an abomination.

I have to conclude in 25 years of retrospect (and after having seen “God's Angry Man” a few years ago) that he may have started off as someone that served his god and the churches that he pastored. But not long after discovering mass media and polishing his shtick to absolute perfection (on a variation of the “all Christians are bad but me; I am the One” refrain), he became a “star” and the resulting overwhelming success simply enabled his openly pathological behavior. He used his tremendous power over very vulnerable people who had developed a dependency on him and his Cult-of-Gene personality in a very highly irresponsible and abusive fashion.

Gene was not a good bible teacher and he was not particularly good at preaching. He was a captivating speaker who eventually became a skilled con man, empowered by vulnerable and bewildered followers. It was always about him, and nothing more.

What a waste.

To all of you out there that need god, don't turn to the television or anyone asking for money. As soon as preachers ask for money, run away. Look to your local churches. There are many good ones out there!

Comment by Bob K. — January 11, 2010 @ 5:52 am | [Reply](#)



19.

Very interesting. I had never heard of Scott until today. I grew up attending a Pentecostal church in Glendale called Maple Chapel, that later became Faith Center and started radio station KHOF. My parents were great believers in evangelists, and I went as far as attending 2 years of Oral Roberts University before I saw this whole scene for the scam it was and made a 180

degree turn in my life. From what I've read I would agree with the person who classifies Scott as an abusive sociopath. "What does he really believe?" is not really a proper question to be asked of someone who is clearly mentally deranged but brilliant enough to fool people in high places. It is dismaying to learn how many well-placed followers have been duped with the money he had extorted from poor believers. Similar to Oral Roberts. You don't think the enormous "praying hands" statue adjacent to Oral Roberts University was paid for my money the man legitimately earned, do you? It was paid for by poor old grandmothers who sent their dollars to Roberts because he got some "message" that God "would call him home" unless he raised money to build this monstrous statue of praying hands, as I recall. Extortion of the basest kind. I do feel bad about how Faith Center ended up, because I think the pastor when I went there, even though I no longer believe his teachings, was at least humble and sincere, as far as I can tell, looking back to childhood. But this type of Christianity has always had the potential to attract the sincerely unbalanced, as it seems Scott was.

Comment by A. Coldman — September 29, 2010 @ 2:03 am | [Reply](#)



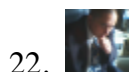
Wow! This guy is a rebel that everybody finds charismatic! I read comments somewhere, maybe in a torrent download, that his last wife was faithful to him and his ministry until his untimely death, then shortly after had his teachings banned, his website removed, and has her own church, using his name and reputation to draw much needed, money giving crowds. Apparently the ushers are supposed to be CIA agents, watching everyone for some reason. Scanning everyone who walks through the doors. Is this statement true or a load of "hooy"?

Comment by [shadowman](#) — December 25, 2010 @ 2:58 am | [Reply](#)



I find the churches of today to be secret "friends" of the Pope/papacy, Billy Graham is one, utilizing and teaching many of their doctrines, traditions etc. They preach about Satan and hell, Sulphur and brimstone, unbelief, that sin takes you straight there, then next Sunday they state Hell doesn't exist. They try to control one by many means, using fear of the unknown, guilt, cunning tricks to get you along to their church, giving you the hard talks so you'll never fail to attend, calling on you at unrealistic hours, etc. There's a negro guy with a snoop doggy Dogg complex trying to do a similar thing as Dr Scott in the USA at present. How can we find the real truth, know and live the truth if we're being spoon fed crap? Or someone over the centuries has added or changed scriptures to suit the communities of their era, or some other sect hellbent on world domination?

Comment by [shadowman](#) — December 25, 2010 @ 3:08 am | [Reply](#)



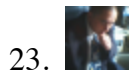
I'm sick of ALL the crap! I do what I'm suggested – pray and ask the Holy spirit to teach me ALL, removing the devil's veil from my mind and eyes.

After all, he is supposed to be our teacher, spiritual instructor, according to J. I get revelations, through reading the scriptures, through prayer, and waiting many scriptures in a different way, more clearly, yet my church friends tell me I'm wrong, try to convince me saying, "Oh you're spending too much time in that, going too deep, it doesn't matter, it's rubbish, etc". I feel sometimes I'm expected to just lie down, and just take it in the butt. I must be their Mind controlled robot slave.

I wish God would just answer my prayer and show me the full truth according to his WORD. The Holy Bible. I guess we believe what we do depending on which version we read, and how we interpret it.

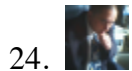
I find if I'm not following one particular denomination, I get hassled, forced into submission, by them, with unscheduled phone calls and visits, once I make a public acceptance of The Christ, through them.

Comment by [shadowman](#) – December 25, 2010 @ [3:24 am](#) | [Reply](#)



My apologies – my last comment should read as follows – “I find if I've once become a member or attended ONE particular denomination, made a stand then fell away, and in time I've returned to make a re-dedication or public acceptance to The Christ; I get hassled, forced into submission, with guilt trips etc. Also I nearly always get unscheduled, late night, phone calls and visits, by them”.

Comment by [shadowman](#) – December 25, 2010 @ [3:34 am](#) | [Reply](#)

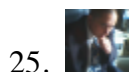


“One interesting sidelight: during his battle with the FCC the scientologists fell all over themselves to help him out. The awful Heber Jentzsch used to show up on the set of Scott's show. But then Scott seemed to drop them. Now I've heard it alleged that Melissa is looking to Scientology to bail her out of her financial difficulties. Any light you can shed on this?”

Where there's a great money making potential, they'll be there to offer help, then grab what they can by any means. Get the dirt on you. Maybe sue. Look at what John Travolta's gone through after the death of his son. Accusations of Homosexual acts within the “org”.

I spent time as a “Sci” in NZ, and found their teachings of the mind good, but realized how money-oriented they really are. It's an organization masquerading as a religion, but there's no sermons on Jesus and his death and resurrection. There's only praise for their God, Ron. It's definitely a man-made religion.

Comment by [shadowman](#) – December 25, 2010 @ [3:51 am](#) | [Reply](#)



I have to come to realize through prayer and reading the Bible, that the Book of Revelations 13:1-18, speaks, telling us that the "mark of the beast" as having hints of past events, that the "prophesies" HAVE already happened via the Papacy. They will happen in the future, according to conspiracy theorists (like NASA and Project Stargate, HAARP, RFID Chips, the Zionist protocols and plans, etc). And that the mark may not necessarily be the Hollywood created "666's on top of your head", or other baloney Sci Fi stories, but religious in nature. And we may have only the years between 2013 -2025 to wake up and realize it, and turn to Christ. I see it in a different light to what's being preached from the pulpit.

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Comment by [shadowman](#) — December 25, 2010 @ [4:09 am](#) | [Reply](#)



Thank you for writing this. It's really hard to find untainted information on Dr. Scott. I haven't been able to find a place online where people honestly speak about him. I went to Dr. Scott's church from the time I was 4 until I was 21. My mother started watching him on TV because we moved next door to a family who attended the church. She was convinced that we should attend. My father was an Atheist and REALLY disagreed. But my mom became convinced that this was what God wanted so my mother, two sisters and I made the 2 hour drive one way every Sunday and my mother made pledges on credit cards expecting blessings and God's/Dr. Scott's approval. I cannot express to you how deeply the defense of the church was engrained in me and everyone else who went there. A friend of mine went once with me and told me "it's a cult and it's on TV!" I was so angry at her. I wondered if God would show her "the truth." The children under 12 don't attend the service, (because they would probably cry,) they're shipped off on busses to local museums. Dr. Scott said it was to "open our minds," I realize now at 30 years old that it was because he was such a control freak that he couldn't trust anyone to teach Sunday School! From the time I was 12 I was screamed at every Sunday. But I had an abusive father who was home on Sundays and Dr. Scott seemed better than staying home with him. Besides he was against the church and there for against God...or so I was told. Over and over again I was told that the Devil was using my father to keep us from the church and separate us from God. And I believed it! Why wouldn't I? He was mean and *gasp* AN ATHEIST!!!

My mother taught us the things that Dr. Scott taught on TV. When I was 8 my mother read us the "Amityville Horror," and "Hostage of the Devil." I learned about Roswell and the pyramids. My sisters and I though out our elementary and teenage years regularly had episodes of panic and being unable to breath. We were told that it was demons. Imagine what that will do to a child's mind! And every week it was enforced. More fear, more yelling and the unflinching terror of the battle against the devil.

When I was 15 I was pressured to answer the phones one night a week. Everyone used to ask my mom about me and "why I volunteered in the nursery so much instead of sitting in service," or "how come she hasn't been trained as a Voice of Faith." I think my mom felt the pressure. So, once a week I went with my mother to answer phones. It was awful. The same people would call in over and over again and actually say, "This is Kings House 12345 keeping the lines busy." They didn't want to make him mad so even though they had nothing to say and had

already called in their “commitment” (to attend and to tithe,) they continued to call until Dr. Scott wasn't there. We got home at 3AM every time we went. There was no room in which my mother would allow me to be not in bed at 3AM. Everyone was afraid of his yelling. I once asked my mom in front of other Dr. Scott Yelled so much. My mother never got a chance to answer because I was shot down instantly by the people standing around. Particularly the woman who brought my mother into the church. She told me, “it's the people who have to ask who are usually the ones causing the trouble.” I was 13. I didn't wiggle in my seat, I didn't talk, I gave my babysitting money as tithe, (sometimes all of it,) I came to church every week and yet I was not good enough. I learned from the time I was a child that my best effort would never be good enough. But I loved him. Revered him. He was my pastor. My teacher. A “positive” man in my life. I stopped attending that church nearly a decade ago and I'm ashamed of how long it took me to admit to myself that it was as my friend had suggested, a cult. I've gone to therapy extensively, (obviously not just because I was raised in a cult,) to help dig out who I would have been if I had not been raised a Kings House. I'm still pissed about it. Even though he's dead. And Still, I can't hate him. Still I think, he had to have been sincere when it came to his own beliefs. I can't dismiss him even knowing what I know now. That's how deep the defense of the church runs.

Comment by Exkingshouse – December 30, 2010 @ [9:33 am](#) | [Reply](#)

27. 

I first saw Dr. Scott on a TV in a motel room also, the same day the Dodgers lost a playoff game to the Astros in October of 1980 while staying overnight in SF after having travelled across the country by bus. I was switching channels and the Dr. was talking to a man about mental institutions. I found him interesting and later watched him quite a bit in the early 80's, even going to his church a couple of times in downtown L.A. Left some manuscripts with him. Do you know how to find out the exact date that he first mentioned Jesus' crucifixion as being April 3, 33? I'm pretty sure it was in early 83.

Comment by [Paul Martin Hennessey](#) – March 5, 2011 @ [2:23 am](#) | [Reply](#)

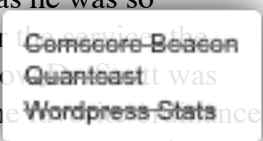
28. 

Well, can't say when I first saw him with that Catholic collar and smoking a cigar talking about Jesus, but I was curious and in between the nonsense was something that interested me so I kept watching. I remember he got married and his young wife left him for someone else and he went off the deep end. When the girls in the hot tub stuff started I quit watching him. So I discovered this footlocker full of Scott VHS tapes in plastic cases. These are tapes I made from TV and there is no telling what shape they in, but I wonder, is there any interest? There is over 50, a few 1995, but mostly earlier. When he was younger I liked listening to him.

Comment by Rick Adams – June 16, 2011 @ [6:39 pm](#) | [Reply](#)

29. 

I went to his church (briefly) many years ago. What struck me the most was he was so unapproachable. He warned that if anyone went up to speak with him after ushers would stop them and throw them out. Was Jesus like that? Funny how he always preaching on the Christians being free from the law but kept his own because it was a moneymaker: Tithing! Why didn't this erudite Bible scholar quote such scriptures as Leviticus 27:30-34 where the tithe consisted ONLY of agricultural produce taken from the LAND OF ISRAEL, and tithing was an ordinance given BY MOSES TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, not the children of other nations? No one, however well educated he is, has the right to change God's statutes and ordinances just because it's profitable to do so. And what about Proverbs 22:16 which warns you not to give money to the rich or it'll only make you poorer? Why do these rich charlatans pick and choose which parts of the Old Law to enforce on the Body of Christ? Read Acts 15. The apostles (and the Holy Spirit) did NOT impose tithing on Gentile believers so modern preachers shouldn't do it either!



Comment by [Patricia](#) — August 8, 2011 @ 3:13 pm | [Reply](#)

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