



BAYLOR
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Peter Rice
Chairman of General Entertainment Content
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cc: Robert Chapek
Chief Executive Officer
The Walt Disney Company
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Dear Mr. Rice and Mr. Chapek:

I write in reference to a recent broadcast upon the History Channel entitled “Cults, Hate Groups and Secret Societies,” which aired in August and has popped up with additional viewings overseas, and now appears to be scheduled for re-airing in the near future here in the United States. Clips from an interview of me, originally filmed some years ago, appear in this episode.

I am especially concerned in that the show considers two large international movements, the Church of Scientology and the Masonic Order, as if they have a history of involvement in violence or hate speech. Both are introduced and treated as if they are similar to relatively small groups such as the Peoples Temple and the Ku Klux Klan, both of which committed multiple acts of violence in recent decades. It is true that

Scientology and the Masons have been the subject of much controversy and the object of significant public debate over the last generation, but neither has been seriously accused of acts of violence such as were committed by Charles Manson, Marshall Applewhite, or the kind of hate speech we associate with Neo-Nazis. "Cults, Hate Groups and Secret Societies" is a clear case of a show seeming to present a historical documentary but in fact targeting its subject topics with a blatant "guilt by association" argument.

I want to clearly distance myself from such shoddy work by your employees in creating this show. Both the Church of Scientology and the Masonic Movement have been scrutinized by knowledgeable scholars and researchers of their history, beliefs, and practices. I am sure that they would have assisted your staff in presenting up-to-date and objective information, and you would not have had to rely upon a handful of pseudo-experts who appear in this show but who have studied neither of the two groups upon which you focus. Both Scientology and the Masons are large and impressive movements, each quite interesting in their own right, deserving of and certainly worthy of consideration by the History Channel. They merit better treatment than simply be dismissed and denigrated with an ignorant comparison to the miniscule movements known only for their violent end.

The History Channel is designed to present the results of the best historical research to a popular audience. It would appear that in this case you have failed and have presented only ignorant pseudo-scientific and prejudicial information on the subjects of the show. I hope you will withdraw the show, and when you return to the subject in the future, gather a set of knowledgeable scholars to assist you. I also request that you withdraw the clips of me from any future airings of this show.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Gordon Melton

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