

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Scientology's Narconon Trois-Rivières Shutdown

Narconon practices risky, according to regional Health Agency

The Mauricie and Central-Quebec Health and Social Services Agency gave details on Tuesday about the reasons that led it to deny certification to the Narconon Trois-Rivières detoxification center.

The center was ordered to cease its activities and to relocate the twenty-four residents who were there. Seventeen of them were transferred to Narconon centers in the United States. The organization has ten days to send its comments to the Agency, which will then issue a final decision. The center will then have sixty days to contest the decision before the Quebec administrative court.

Of the fifty-five criteria required for certification, the Quebec Accreditation Council identified forty-six deficiencies, twenty-six of them considered high-risk. One of the procedures that represents a health risk is the sauna sweating sessions combined with massive doses of vitamins.

Narconon's methods are based on the teachings of the Church of Scientology, which, according to the Agency, perceives drug addiction as moral depravity and associates it with dishonesty.

Marc Lacour also confirmed that the regional complaints commissioner has received a certain number of complaints about Narconon. Clients who wanted to end their stay prematurely complained that their identity cards, passports, and money were taken and withheld to make departing more complicated.

NARCONON closure: Employees not paid

tvanouvelles.ca (translated) [Apr 17] ~ TROIS-RIVIÈRES | (QMI Agency)

Former employees of the Narconon Trois-Rivières center shut down by Quebec fear they will not be paid the money owed them.

The Mauricie Health and Social Services Agency revoked the certification of Narconon, a detoxification program with ties to the Church of Scientology.

Narconon's employees are now saying they haven't received their salary for many weeks and they fear they will never be compensated. "They didn't say anything to us about our pay," said a woman who worked there. "I think our money is lost. We ought to forget about it."

Another former employee denounced the fact that Narconon managers who are members of the Church of Scientology advocate honesty but don't practice what they preach.

"It's not the program that's the problem," said a former employee. "The problem is management. The problem is that if I teach someone to be honest, then I myself should be honest."

A controversial method

Spending seven to eight hours a day in a sauna for 21 days, shouting at an ashtray, ingesting massive vitamin doses - this, among other things, is the treatment that Narconon Trois-Rivières offers drug addicts.

This peculiar detoxification method is based on the writings of the founder of the Church of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard. A typical two-to-three-month stay at Narconon Trois-Rivières costs \$23,000.

Translation of a French article posted on April 17, 2012 on the website of the Trois-Rivières daily newspaper Le Nouvelliste:

Narconon: l'Agence de santé craignait pour la sécurité des résidents

Narconon: Health Agency feared for the safety of the residents

April 17, 2012

The Narconon detoxification center fails to satisfy 42 of the 55 criteria needed to obtain certification from the Quebec Department of Health, 26 of which are deemed high risk factors. This is the assessment presented this morning at a press conference by the Health and Social Services Agency for the Mauricie-Central Quebec region.

The Health Agency brought up several questionable procedures used by Narconon, for example its sudation method combined with massive doses of

medications, as well as the absence of medical supervision. Residents spend five or six hours a day in a sauna during twenty-five days. These methods are not recognized by the Quebec Department of Health.

Moreover, some residents have said they were prevented from leaving the center.

Narconon has ten days to send its comments to the Health Agency. Following this, Narconon will have sixty days to contest the decision before the courts. As was previously reported, the Narconon Trois-Rivières detoxification center was forced to shut down because the Quebec Department of Health refused to grant it certification.

More details to come.

By Catherine Solyom, The Gazette April 17, 2012 6:15 PM

Health officials have ordered the Narconon rehabilitation centre for drug addicts in Trois Rivières to evacuate and relocate its 32 residents, citing concerns over procedures that “may represent a risk to health” and the lack of doctors on staff.

Following an investigation into the centre’s activities by the Centre Québécois d’agrément, an independent body mandated to monitor quality in health care, the agency for health and social services for the Mauricie Region said Tuesday it does not intend to certify Narconon.

The centre, among the largest of 50 Narconon centres in 22 countries, bases its treatment on the teachings of the Church of Scientology headquartered in California, giving its “students” high doses of niacin and having them sit in saunas for about five hours a day. The rest of the treatment consists of “Training Routines” based on the teachings of L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, in which patients perform the same tasks over and over.

Residents in Trois Rivières paid \$25,000 to \$30,000 for their treatment, which lasted on average three to five months.

Marc Lacour, the director of the Mauricie Health and Social Services Agency,

said he had received several complaints about the centre in the last few months. But the agency's decision not to certify was based on visits to the Narconon centre in February, and the recommendations of a national committee of experts convened in March to discuss the case. Though the centre has been in operation since 2005, it was only this year that certification by the agency became mandatory for all rehabilitation centres, Lacour explained.

"The criteria (for certification) relate to safety, sanitation, nutrition, insurance, administrative practices, an ethical code and the approaches and techniques used by the centre," Lacour said. "The approach used by Narconon is not recognized in Quebec, and it was mainly on that basis that the agency decided to relocate its residents."

Most of the residents, Lacour said, are from other provinces of Canada, particularly British Columbia, and the United States. Most have been relocated to other Narconon centres south of the border.

Lacour said Narconon has 10 days, as of April 13, to comment before the agency makes its final decision on certification. Narconon also has 60 days to appeal the decision at the Tribunal administratif du Québec. In the meantime, Narconon will no longer be able to operate in the Mauricie region.

"For sure, if we came to this conclusion (about Narconon), we worry about what may be happening elsewhere," Lacour said, adding Narconon has been banned in France.

David Love, a former patient and staff member of Narconon in Trois Rivières who has been tirelessly rallying against the organization since he left it in 2009, saw the closing as a victory, but not the end of his mission.

Love has filed a complaint against Narconon and the Church of Scientology with the Quebec Human Rights Commission. André Ahern, the director of legal affairs for Narconon Trois Rivières, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

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Narconon Trois-Rivières: Disturbing testimony from former employees

by Paule Vermot Desroches

April 18, 2012

(Trois-Rivières) Things weren't sailing very smoothly inside Narconon during the past few months. This, at least, is what emerges from the testimony of Narconon employees who, after their sudden dismissal, felt the need to speak out in public about the situation to [i]Le Nouvelliste.

First and foremost, the employees wished to defend the program offered by Narconon as an effective program that has time and again produced excellent results, but they said that the center's administration left much to be desired and sometimes even endangered the safety of certain residents and employees.

Sylvain Bérard, the Ethics Officer, said that Narconon had already been experiencing financial problems for some time, to such an extent that, in recent months, the organization had even been admitting clients with more serious problems of a psychiatric nature.

"Some of these cases weren't admissible to the program because it requires cutting off their medication. But the administration chose to keep them anyway. There were several instances of attempted suicide during the past few months. By law, immediate medical assistance should have been provided, but management decided to keep these persons without calling for an ambulance," says the former employee.

His colleague, Julie Ann Pagé remembers a female resident who, less than ten days earlier, made at least two suicide attempts in one day, but she was not referred to a hospital. Ms. Pagé says that incidents like this were blamed on the employees for supposedly "not delivering enough."

"We believe in what we are doing, and we do it for the sake of our residents, for the families, because we believe that everyone can be rehabilitated. But we were treated like assholes, as less than nothing," says Julie Ann Pagé, who was responsible for the withdrawal phase at Narconon.

All of the employees gathered around the table said they had received no pay for at least six weeks, and neither had they received the 4% of salary

due to them at the termination of employment. Yesterday morning, they went to the labour standards commission office to inquire about their possible recourse.

"There were several times we didn't get paid on time. But they promised us all sorts of things. It was lie after lie. We weren't supposed to talk about it with each other, otherwise we risked getting fired," remembers Sylvie Houde.

Narconon's finances were so badly managed that Julie Ann Pagé and another co-worker were forced to get rid of the center's trash because Narconon couldn't afford to have its garbage bins emptied. Sylvain Bérard also recalls that, in 2009, clients were compelled to eat ground beef for a whole month, even though the clients could spend between \$20,000 and \$30,000 for their stay.

"We had no right to have a personal opinion. The only thing that mattered was their teaching of Scientology. Don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you. This was one of their internal rules, but they themselves don't apply it. They have no respect for us or for the residents," says Sylvie Houde.

"We're playing with people's lives"

While the Narconon employees were at *Le Nouvelliste*, one of their cell phones rang. On the line was a woman from the Maritimes who was worried because she hadn't heard from her brother who was in therapy in Trois-Rivières. The man she was referring to had been relocated to the Narconon center in Calgary. His family members had not been notified and no one at Narconon Trois-Rivières was answering the phone to reassure them.

Discouragement was perceptible around the table. "There's no better example to show the kind of management that goes on there. Right now, they're taking away all of the center's records, confidential files they don't want anyone to see because of the crooked way they manage," says Odette Poulin.

Odette Poulin points out that every employee had to sign a contract with Narconon that prohibits them from speaking to the media. "We weren't

supposed to reveal anything to the press. We're speaking today anyway for the sake of the parents and the students, but also for the employees. We were treated as less than nothing," says Julie Ann Pagé. "We didn't even get a thank you or a letter of reference," laments Odette Poulin.

Émilie Marin, who resigned from Narconon last March 30, emphasizes however that their criticism of the administration only concerns Narconon Trois-Rivières and does not necessarily apply to the other centers around the world.

Sylvain Girard, for his part, suspects that the Narconon Trois-Rivières administration is now turning to Toronto to open a new center. "I think this is the biggest danger, because they'll open somewhere else in Canada. The whole country needs to be aware of what's happening. As far as the program is concerned, I firmly believe in it. I believe that a person should not be cured of an addiction by taking other drugs. The Narconon program is a logical program. But it was time for the government to close down Narconon Trois-Rivières because psychiatric cases are out of line with our capabilities. The situation had become dangerous," said Mr. Bérard. "We're playing with people's lives," adds Julie Ann Pagé.

Le Nouvelliste tried again to contact the administration of Narconon Trois-Rivières by telephone and by email to offer an opportunity to respond, but without success.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/...215/story.html>

In October 2009, six months after he had gone from “graduate” of the Narconon program to “Certified Counsellor,” David Love began a crusade to have it shut down. He has filed a complaint with the Quebec Human Rights Commission.

Photograph by: Marie-France Coallier , THE GAZETTE

MONTREAL - Perhaps the lowest point in David Love’s “treatment” for drug addiction at Narconon Trois Rivières was the five-hour sauna on his 25th

day of five-hour saunas.

Being forced to yell at an ashtray for hours on end – “Stand up, ashtray!” “Thank you.” “Sit back down, ashtray!” – also left him confused and frustrated. But it was when Love realized that the rehab centre inspired by the teachings of Scientology was actually putting vulnerable addicts’ health at risk – and that he had become a part of the machinery – that he decided to get out.

On Oct. 28, 2009, six months after he had gone from “graduate” of the Narconon program to “Certified Counsellor,” Love left the facility and began a crusade to have it shut down. In July 2011, following his complaint, the Quebec College of Physicians ordered Dr. Pierre Labonté, Narconon’s “medical manager,” to cut his associations with the centre, located about 125 kilometres northeast of Montreal. The Quebec labour relations tribunal also mediated in Love’s favour when he complained about being paid \$2.50 an hour as a staff member.

Then last Friday, 2½ years after Love began his campaign, public health officials for the Mauricie region ordered Narconon to relocate its 32 residents and told the organization they would not certify the centre, because its approach was not recognized in this province, and that its practices, including the saunas and massive doses of niacin, were potentially putting patients’ health at risk.

Most of the patients, from B.C. and other provinces as well as the United States, have since been relocated to Narconon centres in the U.S.

As for David Love, he remains drug-free since he left Narconon – but deeply traumatized by what he saw and went through in Trois Rivières.

“I’ll wake up from nightmares sometimes. I still have a very difficult time sleeping,” says Love, who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder by a psychiatrist at the Allan Memorial Institute. “It’s the intensity of the program they put you through, it affects your psyche.”

Love’s saga with Narconon began after he was hospitalized in Vancouver for a drug overdose. His daughter, then an Ethics Officer at Narconon, suggested he should join her in Trois Rivières for Narconon’s drug-free program. She

could work out a deal whereby he could pay half price – \$11,500 – in bi-weekly instalments, using his unemployment cheques. He agreed.

The first step, he says, is always in one of the withdrawal rooms on the ground floor, where each patient spends the first three to 12 days. No physician is seen before or during drug withdrawal.

Then come the personality and IQ tests, performed at regular intervals on patients, and the interrogation by an Ethics Officer to make sure a patient, or “student” as Narconon calls them, is not an undercover reporter.

Once cleared, the student can then begin the “Purification Rundown,” 4.5-to-five-hour-long sessions in the sauna, in conjunction with massive doses of niacin. L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction author and the founder of the Church of Scientology, believed that drug residues are stored in the body’s fatty tissues, causing the addict’s cravings when they are partially released later on.

But they can be flushed out through a regimen of exercise, sauna and high doses of vitamins, particularly niacin, Hubbard believed. According to Love, students got doses of niacin that far exceeded Health Canada’s recommended maximum of 500 mg a day.

In high doses, niacin is toxic to the liver, Love said. “And many (Narconon) patients already have compromised livers because of their alcoholism, and some have Hepatitis C.”

The head of the Mauricie public health agency, Marc Lacour, said Tuesday that at least four of the centre’s patients had been taken to hospital in the last few months, but for reasons of patient confidentiality, the agency could not provide details.

Love also remembers a few who suffered when Narconon staff refused to give them their medicine. On several websites used to attract potential clients, Narconon boasts of its 70-to-75 per cent success rate and entirely drug-free program – which even excludes prescription drugs. In one case, staff members withheld insulin from a diabetic patient undergoing the sauna treatment. That young man ended up in hospital for three days, Love said. In another, it took away a patient’s anti-depressants. He jumped from a second-

floor window in a suicide attempt.

As for its success rate, in an interview with CBC this month, the legal affairs director of Narconon, André Ahern, admitted Narconon does not necessarily keep track of patients once they leave the facility – so it cannot know how many have relapsed. Ahern did not answer The Gazette’s requests for comment Tuesday and Wednesday.

For Love, the lasting effects of the Narconon experience were psychological.

The ashtray routine was just one of several training routines Love says are designed to make students accept they are being controlled, and teach them how to control others.

In another routine, two students were put in a room and repeatedly ordered each other to go to a wall, touch a wall, pick up a bottle, put it down, etc. The exercise could last hours, or several days, but until students were deemed to have completed it they couldn’t move on, Love said.

“They wouldn’t let a patient go on to the next stage until they were ‘cracked,’” Love said, quoting from one of Hubbard’s books.

“These things really affected me. Being forced to say there’s nothing more I can do.

“They’d say keep going, keep going, when people were in tears ... You have no money, you don’t know the language, you have nowhere to live, no money for food, you’re stuck there. You’re f---d. You have to do it. ... It was One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest times 10.”

When patients complained to parents who were paying the fees, staff members would convince them that it was normal they should want to leave, but that for their own good they had to complete the program.

Love only realized that Narconon was closely linked to the Church of Scientology when he graduated from the program after five months, and became a staff member. He was given \$700 worth of Scientology books that echoed the teachings in the Narconon books he already read.

Narconon often recruited former students to be staff, Love said.

Lacour, of the public health agency, said that following several complaints, Narconon Trois Rivières has been more upfront recently about its ideology. "They are no longer hiding the fact they are inspired by Scientology, but they are not there to recruit," Lacour said.

Love disagrees, and says he believes that on top of providing new recruits to the church, Narconon, which has 50 centres in 22 countries, funnels money to it. Since 2005, when the centre in Trois Rivières opened, Love calculated it had treated 720 patients and earned more than \$16 million, much of which went to church executives in the form of salaries, and donations to the church.

Love has received leaked emails that point to the close relationship between the Church of Scientology in Montreal and Narconon Trois Rivières.

Love, along with four other former patients, has filed a complaint with the Quebec Human Rights Commission claiming that Narconon Trois Rivières exploited their disability - drug addiction - in getting them in the program and having them do manual labour. Also named in the complaint are the Church of Scientology International and Narconon International.

Love also plans to attend a protest outside Narconon Trois Rivières on April 29 - even if its staff and residents have moved on to other locations.

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BY [TONY ORTEGA](#)

FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2012

DAVID EDGAR LOVE: "I THINK I HAVE SCIENTOLOGY BY THE BALLS"

When I talked to David Edgar Love by Skype at his Montreal apartment Wednesday evening, he sounded exhausted -- he'd had only an hour of sleep in the past two days.

"I'm pretty tired. I was up until about 5 this morning, then I had to wake me up at 6 and had that radio interview," he says, crediting his good friend and translator, just one of many members of Anonymous who have supported Love over the last two and a half years as he's waged a one-man war against Scientology's Narconon drug treatment center in Trois-Rivières, Quebec.

Sunday evening, news began to leak that one of Love's numerous complaints about the treatment center to Canadian authorities was paying off: Quebec health officials ordered the facility closed immediately, even as Narconon appeals the government's finding that it failed miserably in an attempt to get certification for its unscientific methods of treating drug addiction.

Since the news broke, Love has been talking to Canadian journalists as they scrambled to get details on the sudden closing, which came with no advance public word from health officials.

After more than two years of telling his own story of witnessing fraud and abuse at the center, and relentlessly pursuing Canadian authorities with more than 3,700 pages of documents he had amassed about the facility, Love was still in some shock that his work had suddenly, and so spectacularly, paid off.

"We weren't expecting this," he admitted.

Canadian media is well aware of Love's story, however, and CBC radio quickly put together [a lengthy interview with him](#) which laid out the basics of his story.

Love himself went into the addiction center for a methadone habit in December 2008 and finished the program in May 2009. He was then recruited with four other graduates to be new staff members. With access to the center's records, however, he could see that its claims of an 80 percent record were false, and that the opposite was true -- about an 80 percent *failure* rate. He also realized that Narconon was not just a Scientology enterprise but one that was trying to turn patients into Scientologists through its bizarre "training routines" which required, in part, talking to ashtrays (something [even Tom Cruise has done](#) in his own church training). And although Love had come through the program all right, he witnessed others who were being harmed by the unscientific treatment, which combines weeks of 4.5-hour daily stints in a sauna with huge doses of niacin and other vitamins.

In October 2009, Love left the center with reams of documents and then began the lengthy process of trying to get authorities to pay attention to what was going on there. He filed a labor complaint which has been settled; he complained about the center's only doctor to the Quebec College of Physicians, which then banned the doctor from the facility. Love has another complaint that is being considered seriously by Quebec's Human Rights Commission; he is pursuing another action with the Canada Competition Bureau, which prosecutes cases of false advertising; and he also went to the Ministry of Health and Social Services, which has now shut the center down.

The ministry's Health and Social Services Agency, under a new law, requires addiction treatment centers to file for certification, and the Narconon facility did so last June. A committee of experts considered that application after making visits to the center in February. After weighing the recommendations of those experts, the agency decided not to grant a certificate, and met with Narconon officials on April 10, instructing them to relocate their patients "as quickly as possible because of the risks to health and safety," the agency wrote in a public statement. Translated from the French, it goes on to say...

The organization can no longer admit new residents and has ceased all admissions. Narconon has been cooperative and has complied with the relocation order in a timely manner.

The last residents left the center yesterday.

The relocation was requested because of certain procedures that may represent a health risk, for example the sudation method that is combined with the massive intake of vitamins, as well as the lack of an agreement with any doctors...

The report identified many corrective measures that need to be applied to the operation of the organization and to its program. Of the fifty-five criteria required for certification, forty-six were found to require various types of corrections and twenty-six of these criteria were deemed high-risk factors. Mr. [Mark] Lacour, [the agency's Director of Social Services] adds: "The recommendations are mainly related to the organization's approach, which is not scientifically recognized in Quebec."

We were curious if experts on Narconon were as stunned as we were that Love's complaints had produced such a result.

"Getting a Narconon shut down is an unprecedented accomplishment," says David Touretzky, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University who for years has collected information about Narconon and warned the public about its unscientific methods. "Some Narconon franchises have closed or relocated for business reasons, but getting one shuttered by a government agency is nearly impossible. David Love has been working on this for years; he richly deserves a victory lap."

But Touretzky also pointed out that Narconon's methods have been known -- to those who care to do the research -- for a long time. "I run the Stop-Narconon.org web site and have been receiving a stream of horror stories from Narconon victims or their anguished parents for years now. With Trois-Rivières shut down, some of their clients will be moved to these other Narconons. All of these sites employ the same misleading tactics to sucker people in, and practice the same brand of dangerous quackery. All of them need to be closed."

Last year, longtime Scientology journalist Mark Ebner, with editor Walter Armstrong, produced [a lengthy investigative report about Narconon](#) at Maer Roshan's recovery news website, The Fix, which showed that Narconon's unscientific methods, misstatements about its effectiveness, and evidence of harming patients has produced a lengthy and voluminous track record of calamity since it was started by a prison inmate in 1966: "Unsuspecting clients pay as much as \$30,000 for 'treatment' consisting of a bizarre detox process that poses serious health hazards, followed by indoctrination in Scientology masked as drug rehabilitation," the duo wrote.

An in-depth investigation by The Fix found that very little about the Narconon program stands up to scrutiny -- scientific, statistical, or any other kind. Its widely publicized 76 percent (or higher) success rate is almost certainly wildly exaggerated (most recovery centers would be thrilled to see recovery rates of 20 percent). Many of the studies cited by Narconon to substantiate its claims were self-funded. Some were conducted by Scientologists; others are misleadingly presented. A 1981 Swedish study -- funded by Narconon -- found that only 23 percent of clients had completed the program, of whom 6.6 percent said they'd remained drug-free for a year. Yet by spinning the data like a top, the group promotes the study as proof of a 76 percent recovery rate. Paul Schofield, a former Scientologist who worked for Narconon in Australia from 2002 to 2008, told The Fix, "The success rate they promote is simply fraudulent. None of the claims that Narconon is an effective program have been independently verified."

As shown in their article and at Touretzky's website, this information about Narconon has been around for years. But getting government officials to *do* something about it is another matter. For quite a while, we've been somewhat awestruck by David Love's boundless energy and determination, and the way he repeatedly, and patiently, pushed Canadian authorities through what seemed a glacial process.

So, I asked him, how did he manage to do it?

"I had to give them a little bit of information at a time, a little at a time," he says. Eventually, he turned over about 3,700 pages of documents that he'd managed to either smuggle out of the center or research and write on his own. But it also helped, he says, that he had seen the problems at the center with his own eyes.

"I guess I was just in a unique position -- I had worked there," he says.

It was his daughter who convinced him to come to the center -- she had gone through the program herself and had been recruited to its staff after graduating. (Love says this is the standard procedure; rather than run the center with medical personnel or addiction experts, the staff is made up of former addicts working for only about \$2.50 an hour.)

On May 1, 2009, Love finished the program and then was recruited as an employee. It was then, he says, "I went through books and realized it was all Scientology. And I started checking the actual success rate and realized it was fraudulent."

In a story published last night, [the Montreal Gazette's Catherine Solyom](#) described how Narconon's treatment slides into Scientology training...

The first step, [Love] says, is always in one of the withdrawal rooms on the ground floor, where each patient spends the first three to 12 days. No physician is seen before or during drug withdrawal.

Then come the personality and IQ tests, performed at regular intervals on patients, and the interrogation by an Ethics Officer to make sure a patient, or "student" as Narconon calls them, is not an undercover reporter.

Once cleared, the student can then begin the "Purification Rundown," 4.5-to-five-hour-long sessions in the sauna, in conjunction with massive doses of niacin. L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction author and the founder of the

Church of Scientology, believed that drug residues are stored in the body's fatty tissues, causing the addict's cravings when they are partially released later on.

But they can be flushed out through a regimen of exercise, sauna and high doses of vitamins, particularly niacin, Hubbard believed. According to Love, students got doses of niacin that far exceeded Health Canada's recommended maximum of 500 mg a day.

In high doses, niacin is toxic to the liver, Love said. "And many (Narconon) patients already have compromised livers because of their alcoholism, and some have Hepatitis C."

Hospitalizations were common, Love says. And the more he learned about the place, the more he and his daughter were souring on it.

In June 2009, he says she told him, "Dad, I know you're strong enough now to stand on your own. Please, kick some ass." She then left suddenly, abandoning thousands of dollars in furnishings at her apartment.

"I woke up Father's Day morning, and she was gone," he remembers. "Here I was, alone in Quebec. I couldn't speak French. It was horrible." (She's now in British Columbia where Love's three other children and four grandchildren live -- with one more grandchild on the way. "I've been able to fly back to see them on occasion, thanks to Anonymous," he says.)

Over the next several months, as he saw patients taken in under false pretenses, and saw some harmed, Love says he became determined to bring news of Narconon to the outside world.

"I contacted Bonnie Woods in England," he says, referring to an ex-Scientologist who famously sued the church. "I had come across her website. Within an hour she got hold of Gerry Armstrong in Vancouver, and the both of them gave me advice on how to leave."

Armstrong is also well known for how he left Scientology, taking with him thousands of documents, damning evidence that L. Ron Hubbard had lied about much of his history. Armstrong paid for it by being hunted down in a series of legal actions by the church, which keep him out of the United States to this day.

Love says that Armstrong put him in touch with an anti-cult group in Montreal, who in turn put him in contact with journalists at the CBC.

By the time Love left the Narconon facility on October 28, 2009, he was escorted by federal agents, who hid him in a hotel room for a few days.

"All I took was big garbage bags of documents when I left. All I could carry," he says.

He went back several days later to pick up some things, but Love says that today he lives a very simple life in a small bachelor apartment in Montreal, about an hour and a half from Trois-Rivières. He works at a marketing center to pay the bills (he's currently on leave), but what has sustained him, he says, is the help he started receiving from members of Anonymous after news of his effort to fight the Narconon center began to spread on the Internet. When word of his limited resources became known, people simply began sending him checks to help him keep going.

"I wouldn't have survived without Anonymous," he says.

I asked him what else provided his stamina over the last three years, and he gave credit to his father.

"He arrived from Ireland when he was a little boy, when he was 7 or 8 years old. He landed in New York, on a White Star ship. Then he traveled over to British Columbia. He was a successful businessman, and he taught me a lot of lessons," Love says. A diabetic, his father died at only 39 years of age, when David was only 8.

"It was pretty devastating," Love says. But he never forgot something his father told him: "Dave, never start something if you're not going to finish it well, and never give up if it's for what's good and what's right." Over the years, Love says it's stayed with him.

"I guess I just moved forward with that in my heart and soul. I hate seeing people taken advantage of and abused."

Love hasn't had an easy time of it himself -- he's had nine major surgeries, which left him with titanium screws and plates in his back. He succumbed to drug addictions through the pain medications for his condition.

"I've been through some tough times. I guess I'm just an old guy who cares," he says. On May 30, he turns 60 years old. "But I feel 45!"

Certainly, over the last three years, he's showed the perseverance of a younger man.

On Sunday, at about 6:20 pm, Love received an e-mail from one of his inside sources at the treatment center -- the employees had learned that they were all being let go, and the patients were being moved. His source told him that one of the center's leaders actually uttered the words, "David Love has finally won."

"Within half an hour I'd received two other messages," he says. He started putting the word out that the facility was actually shutting down.

But that closing doesn't mean that he's done with the Trois-Rivières center, or with Narconon in general. He's still passionate about an ongoing investigation by Quebec's Human Rights Commission, which he says is taking his complaints very seriously.

"The Human Rights Commission can drag them into court -- there's a very strong court precedent from 1988," he says. "I made the case to them that while in a treatment center, a patient is disabled, and if you exploit them, the Commission has jurisdiction. It's a very serious matter."

And it's in that complaint, he says, that he is attempting to get Scientology itself, and not just its front group, Narconon, on the hot seat.

"That's where I named the church, [Scientology leader] David Miscavige, ABLE, everybody. They're in deep shit over this one," he says. Representatives of the church repeatedly made visits to the Trois-Rivières facility. "They were all there administering and directing things at Narconon. So I think I have Scientology by the balls."

Wednesday, [a story appeared in a local paper, *Le Nouvelliste*](#), about employees let go from the Trois-Rivières facility who complained that they hadn't been paid for weeks, and that the center had been taking patients it shouldn't have. Said one former employee: "There were several instances of attempted suicide during the past few months. By law, immediate medical assistance should have been provided, but management decided to keep these persons without calling for an ambulance."

Love heard from another complainant ("There are five of us now," he says) that an investigator at the Commission on Human Rights intends to interview the former staff members who spoke to *Le Nouvelliste*.

In the documentation he's presented to Canadian authorities, Love is careful to point out the structure of Scientology as it was described in the church's agreement with the IRS in 1993. That structure shows that one of

Scientology's entities -- the Association for Better Living and Education (ABLE) -- controls Narconon. And even though Narconon and ABLE try to play down their connection to the church, that connection cannot be denied.

For example, just a few weeks ago, here's church leader David Miscavige, on Scientology's holiest night of the year -- L. Ron Hubbard's birthday -- extolling the supposed expansion of Narconon as just another of Scientology's outreach efforts...

As Ebner pointed out, however, Narconon plays down its connection to Scientology in websites made to look like any other addiction center, and with generic URLs...

Narconon sites are wreathed with generic clip-art images of smiling families and clean-cut doctors in lab coats and stethoscopes; they feature scientific-looking manifestos and additional links to obscure, decades-old academic journals and come packed with glowing reviews. "I matured more in the few months that I was at Narconon than I did in the previous five years," exclaims "A.S." on the website drugrehab.net.

That bait-and-switch strategy to lure in unsuspecting parents (who perhaps don't bother to enter "Narconon" in a Google search and don't comprehend the connection to Miscavige's church) resulted in another nightmare story [just last week](#). The CBC featured a tale of a distraught mother who had paid thousands of dollars for her son to get treatment at the Trois-Rivières center, only to find to her horror that it was actually a front for Scientology.

While some of the Trois-Rivières patients may just get moved to other centers, Love says he's not satisfied only closing down the Quebec facility. He's turning his attention to Narconon's flagship center in Oklahoma.

"I'm going down there to meet [Colin Henderson](#), my friend who was in Narconon down there," he says. "I'm going to go down there and shut it down. I don't care what it takes."
