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Meet a Scientologist—Man from the Hood Makes Good

John Oliver was heading for disaster at a mad rate. Substance abuse and drug addiction were destroying his life. Scientology helped him turn his life around. His video profile is one of 200 "Meet a Scientologist" videos available on the Scientology website at www.Scientology.org.

"If I hadn't gotten into Scientology I'd probably be in jail or dead," says Scientologist and personal trainer John Oliver. "That's where I was heading."

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, in the 1970s, every day was a fight for survival. It was *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* that gave him the chance to turn things around.

"I come from a rough neighborhood," says Oliver. "People were always fighting and getting in trouble."

Oliver's mother wanted something better for her eight children she was raising on her own, so she packed up her son and his seven sisters and moved the family to Houston, Texas.

But Houston had its own challenges. Oliver ended up being bussed to an all-white elementary school where he felt completely out of place.

"That was the first time I ever realized there was a class distinction," says Oliver. "In the old neighborhood, *everyone* was struggling. In Houston it was different. Some of the kids were wealthy. I remember going into the cafeteria at lunchtime and seeing kids lining up to pay for the food they wanted. Those of us who didn't have money got a 'lunch card.' It set us apart. So did my clothes. I put up a good front to prove I didn't really care that much. But the truth is, it made me feel a bit inferior."

Trouble seemed to follow Oliver across country. And that trouble had a name—drugs. He began smoking weed. Soon after, he stopped doing homework, started skipping class and eventually stopped going to school at all. By the time the family moved back to Brooklyn when Oliver was 14, he had fallen so far behind in his schoolwork he had to be put back two grades in school. And as the list of the drugs he was using grew, his future prospects diminished.

It was in 11th grade that Oliver's luck started to turn for the better—in the form of a copy of *Dianetics* a friend gave him. He read the book and for the first time understood why people act the way they do. Gaining that perspective helped him take stock and make some decisions about his life.

He graduated from high school, went on to college and got a job as records supervisor at a law firm.

But it was 10 years later, when he was 30, that Oliver finally overcame the compulsion to take drugs and moved himself out of the danger zone for good. That was when he enrolled on the Purification Rundown at the Church of Scientology of New York.

The Purification Rundown is a detoxification program developed by Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard that helps the individual rid himself of the harmful effects of drugs, toxins and other chemicals that lodge in the body and create a biochemical barrier to spiritual well-being.

"I've been drug-free ever since," he says.

It was shortly after completing the Purification Rundown that Oliver, 41, became a personal trainer.

"I'm into fitness, and this let me turn my favorite pastime into a profession," he says. "What I like best is getting to meet lots of different people. I try to listen, provide what my clients want, and make it fun. They leave feeling like they made progress, and when they feel good, I feel great."

Scientology also helped Oliver create a stable relationship with girlfriend Nina, 33. They use Scientology to keep their relationship strong and positive. If they have an argument they work together to resolve it. They are expecting a child in February and look forward to being parents.

"When I was young I was a pushover and it didn't do me any good," says Oliver. "Scientology has helped me learn to think for myself. All the guys I know from grade school got in trouble. Two of them are in jail for murder. That could easily have happened to me. Scientology gave me a chance in life and I'm taking it."

Watch the John Oliver video at www.Scientology.org.

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The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at Scientology.org now total 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.

A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own official YouTube Video Channel, which has now been viewed by millions of visitors.



Scientologist John Oliver