

Heidi interview in Norway:

C0001 Heidi interview Norway part 1.MP4

(:20) So here I am in Norway, staying at oscar's house, and I've been interviewing people all over the Netherlands and Norway. And it's been a really (sighs) amazing experience, I feel like doing this documentary and this journey that has brought me to this place today, has been completely unexpected, I started out just wanting to talk about my family and try to find healing and figure out why we had ... how, how, our dysfunctional behavior, and our brokenness, came from the cult. I felt very alone in that. I felt that I was misunderstood and alone. And I was misunderstood and alone. Today I feel as if the story that I was doubted about, and, was kind of just screaming into the wilderness without hearing an echo back, is validated. And once I felt listened to, and like, the first 18 years of my life really happened, because other people were telling the same stories as ;me and from all over the world, and they were speaking my language, this special church language, I feel as if I can move on. And there were many times before I got this validation and met these people who are now my friends, there were many times where I felt I was okay and could move on ... (2:20 had to do a take over and over because of a fly) there were many times I felt I was okay and could move on before ... I've said this, okay. (2:37) there's something about being heard and validated that is like part of human nature or something like it's a kind of healing that is necessary, at least it has been for me, before you can really move on. I just felt stuck in a loop of trying to be heard and then getting really angry with extreme hurt underneath that anger, that nobody could connect with me about what I was talking about. I didn't feel like, after I interviewed my parents, that either of them got me at all. I felt like my mom secretly hated me, and was in competition with me, and I felt like my father (3:33) was wearing a smirk on his face that was not going below the surface. I was trying to look in his eyes and talk about things, and it was like I was looking into a blank space. We weren't connecting. After I started finding people who came from the church and had stories like me, I realized I was not crazy ... (interrupted by the fly again) 4:05 after I realized that there were people like me all over the world and that I was not crazy and that there was actually a community of connected former members, it took all the pressure off. Now I just feel very objective, very fulfilled, and very, freer than ever. (4:30) I feel, very happy to be out of the church, whereas before I felt very sad that I couldn't meet their expectations and that I couldn't bear to shut my mind off and that I was a woman so there was no way I could stand to go be a second-class citizen. But I regretted that because I felt like I had lost my whole life and my whole community. But I don't feel that way anymore. After this (4:55) journey, I've realized that the teachings that I believed as a child and a teen and even deep down a little bit to this day, (sighs) really are weird, and uh, disconnected and irrational. So to realize that anything I might have thought, or doubted about myself (5:20) and my beliefs today, um, is really okay to let go. Once I realized ... (5:28) having done the research on this and understanding now more about the leaders and their kind of personalities, after hearing about it from so many people and kind of tracing the timeline and the history of the church and looking at what they

believe and where it comes from, I feel freer than ever because I understand the lack of logic, I understand the roots of the control system, and I understand that these men who are leaders or were leaders, are definitely not the spiritual guides that they were represented as. So I just feel free of the whole cult brainwashing.

One of the main things that I felt like I lost, when I left the church, when our whole family left (6:27) and erased our past, was the incredible connection around the world, this international community where you, any door was open to you, even if you didn't know each other it didn't matter you were immediately like family. Coming to Europe now and going to this reunion, and interviewing people, I feel like I'm back in the church. It really is a special place in terms of that connection and I can see that and be reminded of that, and be reminded of my heritage and my origins which are in this unique cult (laughs). Which has so many special things and one of those special things is that I can still connect (7:10) with people around the world and have doors open to me but this time it's former members. So this journey has brought me back to where I come from but because I've been true to myself and brave enough to stand up for my own freedom of mind, I've been able to get back what I lost, but on my terms.

Going to the reunion was a really amazing and weird experience. (7:42) I was really overwhelmed, to just be surrounded by people, they were singing old Smith's Friends songs, and I knew all the words in English, (7:53) and a little bit in Norwegian, the melodies I hadn't heard forever um, but I was suddenly just singing (8:01) along which made me feel kind of traumatized but was also kind of funny so that's a lot of intensity to be like both laughing and traumatized (laughs) but it's a way of releasing and that's what I think we were doing. (8:15) And everybody was partying really hard, and just um, kind of letting loose and it reminded me of myself in ways that I've been like kind of condemned for being in my family but it's almost like this, like, hardcore, Norwegian Viking vibe or something where you just kind of like raaah let it out and come out the other side. Um, so for me, sometimes I like to let loose like that and there was something in it that is like how I am as a person. Maybe it's the person who leave who have that kind of attitude or something. (8:49) But, I had a lot of fun, everybody there was really cool, really, some of them were very hurt still, a lot of us, but also extremely deep and uh, shaped by their experiences in a way that I don't find a lot in 'the world' because I think when you have a lot of pain and a lot of challenges in your life and you get through them and come out the other side, then you're a stronger, deeper person for it and I could feel that in that room.

9:30 I'm glad I did this, I'm glad I came, it's been life-changing. And I never could have expected this when I picked up a camera four years ago.

at about 9:49 I don't feel today like my family gets me, still, but I feel like because I found people who do, who come, who, who, remember my past and have similar pasts, come from the same place, it doesn't matter to me so much anymore that my family understand me because at least I've found other friends who come from the world that I lived in until I was 18 years old.

(10:40) I don't know if my family just doesn't remember (sighs) the past the way I do or maybe my brothers and sisters didn't experience the church, and they just don't feel like it was part of their lives, I'm confused about that, uh, but I feel, like I'm getting closer all the

time to letting that weird, oldest child, second mother responsibility that is sort of programmed into me go. I'm getting closer to feeling okay with just living my own life and looking out for myself, which might have taken me until 38 years old to figure out but I'm happy where I am today and it's all been worth it. (11:37 kind of messes up the take)

It took a lot to get to this place today where I'm extremely happy and comfortable with myself and I can really say I love myself, to have come from a place where I was taught to hate myself, it took me a long time to get here but I really feel like I love myself today, and that is all you need to feel completely secure and like you have a place in the universe even if you don't have a physical home or community or family or whatever you came from has been taken away if, if you have that core sense of self, then you can get through anything. And coming from a cult, if you're born in it, having that core sense of self can be ... coming from a cult ... 12:45 coming from a cult, coming from being born in a cult, it can be really hard to know who you are or trust your intuition or understand what normal boundaries are supposed to look like, or have regular relationships and I feel like this journey has been worth it because I've gotten to that point where, today, I love myself, and that's where it all begins so I'm grateful for this journey, even though I'm hoping that this documentary will also help get the message out there of experiences like mine so that more children have the opportunity to, have the right to choose who they are and be raised with freedom of mind.

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:00 - :39 I have a minor flip out over a fly.

:39 about a year ago today, it's October 2018 right now, I got a random email from a Israeli journalist. He said that he'd been put in touch with me by a Norwegian journalist who I had just kind of reached out to to ask a few questions about the financial situation in BCC 'cause they were reporting on it. That was, how do you say his name? ... exchange with Oscar.

1:11 That journalist was Vegar Vatn from Tornsborg Blad. So this Israeli journalist acted kind of weird, um, it was all very secretive and special and exciting and I needed to be his angel from North America and help him expose BCC. So I jumped at the chance, because I'm working on this documentary and writing a book and trying to raise awareness about cult kid issues. So next thing you know, I'm on a ... bus to Boston from Vermont and then a plane from Boston to Toronto, I'm in this secret meeting in the Four Seasons hotel with him and another guy, also from some secret special company I can't know about, (2:13) and I find out that basically they need me to find former members and make videos about them and that they are being hired by a secret funder that I can't know anything about whose main goal is to expose the corruption at the top of BCC in the financial arena. Um, this all sounded good to me but I also, it just felt creepy, and I didn't like it uh because it's just, I'm so tired of secrets and anonymity and buried things and not being able to just be open and on the surface. And some of my friends, in north America, who, my few friends (2:55) who are from the church um but have left warned me against it and just said they didn't like how it sounded and they weren't going to be involved but I went for it. So um, after Toronto, we flew straight to new York, and then

interviewed with all these media outlets, and then drove to CT and filmed, and did all these things, and then, um, I can't even remember what happened next but basically. (3:27) ok. After Toronto, after the meeting in Toronto we got straight on a plane to CT, drove around CT documenting things that where the businesses from Europe are located in my childhood home town, and then we went to new York, and interviewed with different media outlets and then I flew to Europe and worked for a month or so, in Vienna, Austria, on editing these um, videos that I had filmed around ... okay. (4:10)

After New York, the journalists went back to Israel, and I went around the country interviewing people who had left. So this was how I finally connected with former members, I barely knew anyone was out there cause I'd tried before and just been kind of like, told to shut up. (4:30) So that was the beginning of my connecting with former members it was really cool and exciting and next thing you know as soon as I published the videos that I'd recorded of different people telling their testimonials (sniffs) ...as soon as I'd published the videos (4:50) I'd recorded of different people telling their testimonials, I was contacted by all these people in the Netherlands and Norway. Overnight I went from having nobody to (5:02) four or five people in north America, and once those videos were published, again overnight I went from four or five people to like, hundreds. So all of a sudden I found everything that I had been searching for which was validation of my past, reconnection with people that spoke my language, including Norwegian, because I finally got to speak, (5:23) use my Norwegian language ability, it's small but big compared to most people, that was really nice because it's part of my history and almost like my DNA, Norway is a really special place to me, and I, overnight all these people contacted me, and I was added to the private groups in (5:49) Netherlands and Norway, and discovered there was a reunion coming up and that's how I got here today and got to meet everybody, and suddenly feel no longer alone. (ends at 6:00, everything after that is useless)