

Conrad Romo runs the [Tongue and Groove](#) Spoken Word Concert Series at the [Hotel Caf&ecute;](#)

Stop on By Sunday the 17th

@ 6:00



Back then, in the early 70's, Scientology staff got paid a whopping ten bucks a week. These staff members are called Sea Org. On occasion they wear lanyards and epaulets and naval looking garb. That's one way you'd recognize them.

Another is by a look they have in their eyes. But, you don't want to get that close to notice. Unblinking, piercing or--I don't know how to describe the look.

Cultish might do.

They sign billion-year contracts

LRH, or L. Ron Hubbard to you, was referred to as the Commodore or Source. Make of that what you will. Not that I'm covertly or overtly ragging this cult, not at all...some of my best friends were cult members. Hell, I was one too! For 14 years!

Yup, I too was a Sea Org member, but, my contract was rescinded after a few months. Luckily, they said I was unfit.

But, I don't want to talk about them anymore. Not now at least. The only reason I brought them up was because of good old Langers. This beautiful temple of a deli turned 60 years old recently. Here's the connection.

People often ask me if I got anything out of all that time I spent in Scientology. My best answer is that, if not for the original location of the Scientology Celebrity Centre, then at 8th and Bonnie Brae, just west of Downtown LA, if not for it, I perhaps would not know of Langers, situated on 7th and Alvarado, right across the street from MacArthur Park, the same place that someone left a cake out in the rain. You may have heard the overdone song of the same name, done by Richard Harris.

But back to Langers...

It has a great fucking Pastrami sandwich! Maybe the best in the world. According to the NY Times and the New Yorker, Langers was rated #1. Do yourself a favor--go there and order a #44 and know for yourself.

It was a Friday night back in '73 and the staff had just gotten paid their weekly ten bucks. It was nearly 10 pm and the weekly graduation ritual had just ended when someone said, "Wanna get something to eat?" So a few of us went to Langers. It was my first time.

Menus were handed out. This one guy didn't need one. He knew exactly what he wanted. He could hardly wait. His ten bucks were burning a hole in his pocket.

Keep in mind that a staff member started his day at 8 am and didn't end til 10 pm and this was six days a week, if he was lucky, and for this, the grunts like the one sitting in the booth with me at Langers earned the meager wages that they did. And back then a #44 pastrami cost \$4.95,

not counting tax and tip. And that is what this guy ordered.

More than half his weekly pay went for that delicious sandwich. The next time you get paid, imagine dropping half of your dough, however much you make, on a sandwich.

And you know what? At Langers, the #44 is worth it.

Be good to yourself and feel blessed that we in LA are home to the world's finest. But still, a word of caution, don't go signing any billion-year contracts.