

Conrad Romo can also be [found here](#). His series on Scientology [can be read here](#)



A fable answering the question: how'd you get in and why'd you stay?

What if, without reading any reviews or finding it in a guide, you just wandered into a little restaurant and the place seemed nice so you stayed? A certain ambiance about the place spoke to you. The food and the service turned out to be good. And when you asked for the bill, it got even better because they comped you! We don't do that for everybody, they told you. But we like you and want you to come back. You'd go back, right? They made you feel special and the food was really something else.

So you become a regular and start to feel more than just a customer. You start to hang out at the place when you're not even hungry, because by now you've developed relationships with the staff. They don't mind it when you help yourself to your own coffee and you don't mind the occasional burnt toast or forgotten side of coleslaw. More often than not, this place and these people come through beautifully. You bring your friends to the place and the way the staff, from the host to the waiters to the managers, fall all over themselves for you like you're a big shot, elevates you in the eyes of your friends. You like how that feels.

## Scientology: Why I Stayed

Written by Conrad Romo

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You are eating all your meals there by now. Why bother to cook? They do a much better job at it than you ever could. Even though it starts to take its toll on your wallet, you reason that in the end, it saves time. You are eating well. You're supporting friends and it's just money anyway.

One day, you don't feel so well. You wind up staying in bed with a belly ache. Someone says that it must've been something that you ate, but you're sure it had to be a 24-hour flu or something. Soon enough, you are back on your feet and at your favorite spot ordering the usual.

One day, there is something you forget to tell the waitress about your order and since you are practically family, you decide to stick your head in the kitchen instead of waiting for her to come out. You figure you'll save her a little legwork. She's on her feet a lot. So, into the kitchen you go. Old dirty circulating fans look as if they haven't been wiped down in years. You spot a few roaches. You detect the ammonia smell of rat piss. A guy, while prepping food, picks his nose then looks in your direction, meets your eyes, and keeps on digging. Another of the kitchen help steps out of the toilet room pulling up his zipper.

What you see, what you now know, makes your stomach do a little dance. You go back to your table having forgotten the unimportant detail that you meant to tell the waitress, and the meal, when it arrives, looks a little less appetizing. Yet you eat it and doubt that what you thought you saw in the kitchen was anything of concern. All the times, all the very many times that they've fed and taken care of you and treated you right, rush through your mind. Put it aside, you tell yourself. You've never questioned them before, so you chew and swallow away.

But you think you see something on your plate; something in the wild rice with Portobello mushrooms looks suspicious. Yes, there probably is a little shit on the plate, your head tells you. But you can't say anything to the waitress that you are now fucking. Can you? No need to cause a scene and get on her bad side. You two have a good thing going, and you are running a tab at the place by now. So when they ask if you might be interested in a part time job, to help out a little, you say yeah. It makes sense. Only now, you start to see a little more frequently little things that start to add up, little things that raise more suspicion. But before you know it, you've acquired a taste for shit.