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The Exclusive Brethren



Just a secretive sect or a dangerous cult?

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN FORCE IDENTITY DISCLOSURE FROM ANONYMOUS WEB SITE OWNER

Burlington Vermont, USA
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The religious sect known as the Exclusive Brethren has forced the owner of a web site used as a world-wide support network for ex-members to disclose his identity.

The wealthy and powerful sect, known for its controversial political and financial activities in several countries, its rigid control over its flock and its long-held practice of splitting families, has launched a lawsuit in the USA aimed at closing the web site, PEEBS.NET.

Because of the litigious nature of the Brethren, the PEEBS.NET domain name was created as an anonymous domain in California, USA in May 2004. However the Exclusive Brethren have attempted several times to find out who is behind the web site.

Last Friday, Tim Twinam, a UK citizen who has been living in Vermont, USA for 12 years, was forced to disclose that he is the owner and originator of the domain. This was part of a Discovery process initiated by the Exclusive Brethren Bible & Gospel Trust, based in the UK, but through their lawyers located in Washington, DC, USA. The Washington lawyers, FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI, served a lawsuit upon PEEBS.NET and TIMOTHY JOHN TWINAM in January, 2007 (Case Ref: 2:07-cv-17) and Mr Twinam, unable to afford legal counsel, represented himself until forced to find legal assistance during December 2007.

"The law suit is flimsy at best", Mr Twinam said. "The Exclusive Brethren do not state that any infringement has occurred, only that it might!"

By claiming possible damages of US\$75,000, the Exclusive Brethren were able to enter their claim into the Federal Court system and eventually compelled Mr Twinam to respond to their questions.

Mr Twinam believes that the entire case is about disclosure.

"The Exclusive Brethren have been very anxious to discover who is behind the web site. Although they only recently allowed their members to use computers, they regard the web site as evil, and they openly harass those who participate."

Mr Twinam added that anonymity was the sole reason that the web site has survived for almost four years.

"They forced the closure of two previous web sites back in 2004 and they would really like to see PEEBS.NET go away as well."

Mr Twinam believes that the fact that the Exclusive Brethren now have his name will generate further legal action.

"They do seem to enjoy litigation", he said. "Now that they have a name means that they can bring their full financial muscles into play."

The Exclusive Brethren were described recently by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd as "an extremist sect and cult". Mr Twinam strongly agrees with this comment and said that a primary focus of the web site was to help cult members escape.

"We help to re-unite families broken apart by this cult and also assist those who need counselling or just simply someone to talk to."

The PEEBS.NET community has created a number of busy Forums with almost 45,000 entries. Within the Forums the Exclusive Brethren are discussed both openly in public areas and also in many private forums where personal stories are shared and members assist the search for lost family members.

"We believe the web site serves a vital function in our world-wide community" Mr Twinam said. "There are many stories of people who say they might not have survived had it not been for the ability to make contact with our community."

Mr Twinam added that the community has researched many suicides and other deaths over the years and that the web site is poised to publish these findings.

Mr Twinam is uncertain of what exactly will happen next, now that the Exclusive Brethren have his name. He lives with his wife Sallie in Jericho, a few miles outside Burlington, Vermont where he works as part of a Technical Support team for an Internet Design company.

For further information see <http://peebs.net/>

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