

= Death of Kaja Ballo =

Kaja Bordevich Ballo ( 1988 ? March 28 , 2008 ) was a university student in the French town of Nice ; her father was Olav Gunnar Ballo , a member of the Norwegian Parliament . On March 28 , 2008 Kaja Ballo took the personality test run by the Church of Scientology , and committed suicide later the same day . Family and friends stated that Ballo was happy prior to taking the test , and that her mood dramatically shifted after receiving the results . She committed suicide hours after getting the results of the test back ; Ballo jumped from the fourth floor of her dorm room . In addition to a note , her family found the Scientology personality test among her belongings . French police investigated connections between Scientology and Ballo 's death , and interviewed two leaders of the organization in France . Prosecutors stated in December 2008 that they were unable to establish a causative link between the Scientology test and Ballo 's death .

A Scientology representative in France asserted that the Scientology personality test was not created by the Church of Scientology , and that it was not related to Ballo 's death . The Church of Scientology 's information chief in Norway , Matthias Fosse stated that the test was not dangerous and that the organization did not bear any responsibility for Ballo 's death . Ballo 's father retained a lawyer to investigate his daughter 's death , and the family considered filing a lawsuit against Scientology . 500 people attended Ballo 's funeral on April 11 , 2008 at Grefsen Church in Oslo , Norway .

The incident received significant media coverage in Norway , and Verdens Gang and Dagbladet devoted multiple cover stories to investigating the controversy . The media faced criticism for its extensive coverage of Ballo 's death . Norway parliament member Inga Marte Thorkildsen commented that she thought indications were that Scientology had a role in Ballo 's suicide . Psychologist Rudy Myrvang told Aftenposten that the Scientology personality test was designed to break down an individual ; he characterized the test as a form of recruitment tool for the organization . Scientology critic Andreas Helda @-@ Lund stated parents of those involved in Scientology contacted him with similar concerns . The Norwegian Psychological Association warned individuals against taking such types of personality tests .

Ballo 's father wrote a book about his daughter 's death , and refrained from interviews with the press until the book was published in 2009 . Titled Kaja : 1988 ? 2008 , the book became a bestseller in Norway . It reached second place on the bestseller list of the Bestseller Association in Norway for general literature , in May 2009 . The author stated he wrote the book as an expository method to both process his grief , inform his family about the controversy , and educate the public about suicide .

= = Family = =

Kaja Bordevich Ballo was the daughter of Olav Gunnar Ballo , a member of the Norwegian Parliament . Her stepmother was Heidi Sørensen , a former member of the Norwegian Parliament , and State Secretary in the Ministry of the Environment .

= = Scientology personality test = =

Kaja Ballo took a personality test given by the Church of Scientology in Nice , France on March 28 , 2008 . The test is known either as the Scientology personality test , or as Oxford Capacity Analysis . The testing location was situated close to her residential area in student housing , in a nearby storefront shopping facility . It was located only a few meters from her dormitory . According to representatives for Scientology , Ballo spent a total of one hour at the facility . She received a negative result from the test . It indicated that some of her responses were situated on what is referred to in Scientology as " an unacceptable level " . The test consists of 200 questions . Ballo missed 100 points on the test , and this was seen as " unstable " . The Scientology test stated she had a " very limited " IQ .

Ballo 's friends and family members said that her mood " changed " after receiving the results .

Family said she had not indicated any problems prior to taking the test . Ballo 's uncle Heljar Ballo stated on a program on public broadcaster NRK that the results of the Scientology personality test were " devastating " to her . He served as a spokesperson for the family during an intense period of their grief . He described her as " happy and bubbly " , prior to taking the Scientology test . Heljar Ballo stated , " We can only relate the facts , that she was doing well in France , was happy and had many good friends , and that she took this test . "

= = Death = =

Ballo committed suicide , hours after hearing the results of the personality test conducted by Scientology . She jumped from the fourth floor of her dorm room in Nice , France , two hours after getting the results of the test . She left behind a note , along with the results of the Scientology personality test . The results of the personality test were found among her belongings by her family . In April 2008 , Aftenposten noted that the French police were investigating connections between Scientology and Ballo 's death . The investigation was being headed by a judge in France . In April 2008 the French police interviewed two leaders of Scientology in France . Prosecutor Eric de Montgolfier opened an investigation into the incident in France , in April 2008 . A French investigating prosecutor told Dagbladet , " We are almost convinced that it is a suicide . But the question is whether something encouraged her to this . " Prosecutors stated in December 2008 that they could not determine a direct link between the Scientology personality test and Ballo 's death .

Agnes Bron , a Scientology representative in France , denied that the test was related to Ballo 's death , and asserted that the Scientology personality test was not created by the Church of Scientology . Scientologists pay royalties to the Hubbard Foundation for use of the test . She said that Ballo never actually received the results of her personality test . A spokesperson for Scientology asserted to Verdens Gang that the results of the personality test are seen as neither positive nor negative , but rather allow the individual to gain insight into their own personality . A representative of Scientology in Norway described the concerns leveled against the organization as " deeply unfair " . The Scientology official noted Ballo had a psychological history as a teenager , and said she had an eating disorder . The Church of Scientology 's Information Chief in Norway , Matthias Fosse , asserted that the Scientology personality test was not " dangerous " , and stated that " millions " of individuals had partaken in the examination . He asserted that approximately 10 @, @ 000 residents of Norway had taken the test . " I have never , never , never heard of someone who has killed on the basis of the OCA test , " said Fosse . Fosse said that Ballo had entered the Scientology premises in Nice of her own volition . Fosse maintained that the negative views of the organization were based on ignorance and intolerance . " I feel deeply for the Ballo family , but it is a rude insinuation that the Church of Scientology has any responsibility for this incident , " said Fosse .

Ballo 's father was critical of the statements made by Fosse about his daughter 's history . He commented to Verdens Gang that the Church of Scientology was negatively impacting the reputation of his daughter and not respecting the privacy of her health history . He did not wish to comment regarding the nature of the investigation in France . Ballo 's uncle Heljar Ballo explained that Kaja Ballo 's family decided to come forward with information to the media about her suicide , due to a motivation to publicize information relating to the circumstances of her death . Heljar Ballo told Aftenposten that the family " had confidence " in the investigation by local law enforcement in France . He thought there was a connection between her death and Scientology . Kaja Ballo 's father retained an attorney to investigate his daughter 's death . In April 2008 , Ballo 's family was considering taking legal action against Scientology . Kaja Ballo was interred on April 11 , 2008 at Grefsen Church in Oslo , and approximately 500 people were present at the funeral ceremony .

= = Commentary = =

In reporting on Ballo 's death , United Press International noted , " Critics say the break @-@ you @-@ down @-@ build @-@ you @-@ up recruitment tool of Scientologists is controversial . " The issue received a significant amount of coverage in Norway news publications ; and media attention

focused criticism on the Church of Scientology . Both Verdens Gang and Dagbladet devoted several cover stories investigating the matter . News media received criticism regarding the amount of coverage given to the incident . A representative of the National Association for Suicide Survivors in Norway regarded it as excessive . News editor of Dagbladet , Peter Raaum , defended the amount of news coverage given to the incident : " We write about this because the survivor has made criticism of the Scientology test that Kaja took just before she took her life . The family wanted a debate about this . What makes this so important is this test . What kind of test is this ? Is it so reprehensible , and significant to what happened ? If it is , I mean it 's something that 's extremely important to focus on . " Ballo 's family agreed to discuss the incident with the media . In an interview Ballo 's father said he did not have issues with the case being front @-@ page news in newspapers .

Norway parliament member Inga Marte Thorkildsen weighed in on the situation , and stated to the Oslo , Norway newspaper Dagbladet , " All indications are that the Scientologist sect has played a direct role in Kaja 's choice to take her own life . " Ballo 's friend and study partner Henry Møinichen told Dagbladet , " I think Kaja would be alive today if she had not gone to the Scientologists . " Psychologist Rudy Myrvang told Aftenposten that testing procedures such as the personality test conducted by Scientology could have negative consequences ; he said the goal was focused on " breaking you down , and then they 'll offer to build you up again " . Myrvang characterized the Scientology personality test as a recruitment tactic for the organization . Dagbladet consulted an expert on the subject of assessment tests , Ole I. Iversen , who characterized the Scientology personality test as " unethical and junk " .

Scientology critic Andreas Heldal @-@ Lund stated that the Church of Scientology views candidates for the test as " raw meat from the street " . " You 're told you 're worth nothing , " he said . Heldal @-@ Lund stated that , " thousands of desperate parents contact me because they have children who have had major mental problems , or taken their own life after similar circumstances to Kaja Ballo " . Scientology @-@ associated celebrity , Hank Von Helvete , commented to the press that he thought psychiatry , not Scientology , was the cause of Ballo 's suicide . TV 2 reported that psychologists advised that subsequent to the personality test , there should be proper follow @-@ up attention with the subject . In an analysis of personality tests available online on social networking sites , Norwegian Psychological Association department advisor Andreas Høstmælingen cited Kaja Ballo as " an example of how wrong things can go " . The Norwegian Psychological Association warned individuals against taking such types of personality tests .

= = Kaja : 1988 ? 2008 = =

Ballo 's father subsequently wrote a book about his daughter 's suicide . He decided not to give interviews to the press about his ordeal until the book was published . He wanted to be able to tell the story and impact of his daughter 's death , on his own terms . Titled , Kaja : 1988 ? 2008 , the book explores the sequence of events that led to his daughter 's death , from her time studying French in Nice . Her early history of psychiatric treatment is discussed in the book . He recounts the difficulties in getting information about his daughter 's death from government authorities . According to the author , there was a slow response in receiving help from the Foreign Ministry of Norway . In an interview with Politiken , he explained the motivation for writing the book : " After the funeral I felt I had to do something relating to grief . This was my way to process the grief . The second issue was that I needed to transcribe the account to later tell my little daughter Oda . " He also said , " I wanted to contribute to greater openness about suicide . " He acknowledged , " Losing a child means that life is turned upside down . I believe that grief becomes heavier if you do not share it with anyone . " The book was written with input from other family members .

Kaja : 1988 ? 2008 became a bestseller in Norway . The book reached second place on the bestseller list of the Bestseller Association in Norway for general literature , in May 2009 . Kaja : 1988 ? 2008 sparked renewed controversy over perceptions of Scientology activities in Norway . In a review of the book , Dagbladet noted that because the author was writing both as a private individual and as a physician , " he is trained to look at the familiar and intimate with professionalism

and distance . " Upon the book 's publication , representative Matthias Fosse of the Church of Scientology stated , " Church of Scientology had absolutely nothing to do with this young woman 's decision to take her own life . We are sorry for the loss the family has suffered , but this young woman was never a member of the Church of Scientology and never participated in any of the church activities . "