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Sports Editor

The Story Behind Brodie's Recovery

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A TV DOCUMENTARY of John Brodie, the 49er quarterback, was seen on Channel 7 the other night.

Brodie came across as a pleasant family man, blessed with deep logic about his trade of professional football, and definitely a person with his feet on the ground.



John Brodie

He made his daily golfing trips seem perfectly sound . . . after all, if one earns a substantial sum for subjecting one's blind side to onrushing linemen, it would be well to remain in condition. Golf and tennis, one or the other every day, are his conditioners.

He did a lot to dispel the notion held by many that he was a heller—a fellow who lucked into a

million and played his time and money away.

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I**N ONE SCENE** Brodie talked about his new interest, now his entire family's belief, in Scientology.

Scientology, he said, helped make his throwing arm feel better. Since the Brodie wing is golden and of much concern to his admirers and detractors, the endorsement of Scientology as a physical aid is intriguing.

Scientology is a non-denominational religion which makes an effort to summate all the available knowledge on planet earth, both ancient and modern. That's a big order, but Scientology is strong on impressing its followers that it is not mystical. It examines the current scene, accepts the fact that man is a spiritual being, that the mind is part of the body, and believes that through the mind the body can be healed.

Brodie's definition of Scientology was less than spiritual. "It helps me dump the garbage out of my mind," he said.

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S**EVERAL YEARS** ago Brodie suffered a broken bone in his throwing arm. He got it, matter of fact, in an auto accident while—as they used to say discreetly, under the influence.

The bone healed but the hurt never really went away. Last September, just before the 1970 season, his arm was in misery.

"Half a dozen doctors examined me," he told interrogator John O'Reilly. "They couldn't diagnose what was wrong. I was worried. Then I met this friend and he talked Scientology to me. He asked me to give him 10 days. I said that's a deal. After 10 days the arm felt better—and I had a good season—and it has felt good ever since."

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T**HE "FRIEND,"** whose name did not get on the air, is Rev. Phil Spickler of Menlo Park.

"I hesitate," said Rev. Spickler, "to speak for another person. I have worked with other athletes with what some people describe as incredible results. I hope to have good news about them one day.

"Yes, I met John Brodie through a mutual friend last September. Scientology is not a conversion religion. It is not mystical, as you know. It's most successful with people who are already very able."

Rev. Spickler said the "deal" with Brodie wasn't a straight 10 days, satisfaction guaranteed kind of thing.

"The 10 days were not necessarily continuous," he explained. "He has a full schedule. I asked him to give me some part of 10 non-consecutive days."

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T**HE BRODIE FAMILY,** John, Susan and four children, are now involved in Scientology. Presumably any one of them can now throw the football 60 yards. (Only kidding, Rev.)

The TV advance blurbs of the documentary said that Brodie's family and family life would be shown. They weren't, and that pleased the Brodies. John said: "Our kids don't feel much pressure. They're part of the neighborhood. We try not to over-expose them."

The 49er quarterback had another word of cheer for 49er fans. "I don't believe in the theory that when you're losing, you're hungry and therefore you play harder and better to win. The 49ers had a taste of winning a division title and the disappointment of not going to the Super Bowl. It was the winning that made us hungrier for more. We liked it."