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3 Scientology Offices in 2 Cities Raided by FBI

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church locations. However, in a 33-page affidavit based on the informant's account, the FBI indicated it suspected high officials of the church of not only planning the burglaries, but plotting to infiltrate the Internal Revenue Service, Justice Department and other agencies to steal other documents.

A federal grand jury investigating possible charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and theft of government property already has been convened in Washington.

Michael James Meisner, a member of the church since 1970 and one-time national secretary, went to authorities June 20 claiming that he had been under "house arrest" by the church since April but that he had escaped.

From March, 1975, until June, 1976, Meisner said, he worked out of the church's Washington office and was

in charge of covert operations by church members to obtain through stealth documents which could not be obtained through legal channels.

Dozens of federal agencies have kept voluminous files on the church since its founding in 1951 by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.

The federal Drug Enforcement Administration conducted investigations to determine whether the church or its members were involved in narcotics traffic, but never brought any charges.

The Internal Revenue Service has been reviewing whether the controversial church deserves its tax-exempt classification.

The Food and Drug Administration for 10 years battled the church—and lost—over efforts to prevent the use of the church's so-called E-meter, a lie detector-like device, in its counseling techniques.

Using the federal Freedom of Information Act, the church in recent years has obtained thousands of government records kept on it, but certain documents have been withheld on the basis of exemptions to disclosure written into the act.

The elaborate conspiracy allegedly perpetrated by the church, the FBI affidavit stated, was aimed at obtaining those documents the church has been denied.

At a news conference later Friday, Vaughn Young, a church spokesman, attacked the searches as unjustified harassment of the church and suggested that Meisner may have been planted into the church as an agent provocateur.

Young said church officials were not allowed to monitor the search of their files and did not know what documents were removed.

But if any documents prove to be stolen, or are copies of material the

church is not supposed to have in its possession, Young said he would be surprised if they were not planted there by the FBI.

Young said the FBI has been out to destroy Scientologists because an arm of the church has made allegations that Interpol, the international police organization, is involved in drug trafficking and the Justice Department and FBI have links to Interpol.

Meisner told authorities that in early 1974 the church decided to launch an "all-out attack" on the IRS through the filing of lawsuits, a public relations assault and actual infiltration by church members to obtain documents.

Gerald Bennett Wolfe was said to have been recruited by Meisner, and Wolfe went to work for the IRS as a clerk typist in November, 1974, while a woman identified as Sharon Thomas was hired in 1975 as the personal secretary of a Justice Department attorney who was handling some Scientology suits.

Both individuals, according to Meisner, copied hundreds of documents relating to the church and gave them to Meisner who sent them to top officials in the church hierarchy.

Young said he could not confirm whether Miss Thomas or Wolfe were church members, but he said the church never authorized any burglaries by anyone.

Using Wolfe's own IRS identification badge as well as falsifications made up on U.S. Treasury department equipment, Wolfe and Meisner on three occasions last year were said to have entered the U.S. Courthouse in Washington to copy Scientology files.

Most of the work was done after business hours, according to the affidavit, and entry to the office of a second Justice Department attorney with extensive Scientology files was accomplished by making duplicates of the attorney's secretary's keys.

On a fourth unsuccessful attempt to get into the attorney's office Wolfe and Meisner were apprehended by FBI agents, but released. Both men allegedly fled Washington, but after a coverup story was made up by high-level church officials, Wolfe was sent back to face the criminal charges, Meisner said.

Wolfe denied any involvement by the church and ultimately pleaded guilty May 13 of this year to a charge of false use of a government seal. He was placed on two years' probation.

Meisner, who disguised himself and was technically stripped of his title with the church though reportedly remaining an unofficial adviser, was to return to Washington and provide

3 SCIENTOLOGY OFFICES RAIDED BY FBI IN 2 CITIES

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Church of Scientology offices in Hollywood and Washington, D.C., were raided Friday by scores of FBI agents searching for more than 150 documents stolen from the U.S. Courthouse in Washington in a series of burglaries last year.

The dawn raids at three locations in the two cities netted an unknown quantity of the allegedly stolen documents, informed sources said.

Using power saws, crowbars and boltcutters to knock down doors and cut open cabinets, FBI agents executed search warrants based primarily on information supplied to them by a onetime high-level official of the church, who has admitted taking part in the burglaries in May and June, 1976.

No arrests were made at any of the
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the same cover story, the affidavit stated.

In April, Meisner told authorities, he told church officials he was tired of waiting to be sent back to Washington and threatened to take matters into his own hands.

At that point, he said, he was put under 24-hour guard and repeatedly "audited" by the church, a form of indoctrination, according to the FBI.

Young denied that Meisner had ever been in Los Angeles, let alone held captive by the church.

After escaping and offering to cooperate with authorities, Meisner was placed in protective custody because he and government officials feared for his life.

Meisner has not been offered immunity for his testimony and he has agreed to plead guilty to an unspecified felony charge in connection with the unauthorized entries.

For several years the church has been investigating Interpol in part because the international police organization has distributed data around the world that is critical of the church and its activities.

Church officials have said that the data distributed by Interpol has been false, but that nevertheless the allegations have been used by foreign countries to deny the 5-million-member church from establishing new outlets.

The alleged infiltration of the Justice Department, according to the affidavit, was primarily aimed at gathering Interpol documents that would be in the possession of the department.