

Church of Scientology Attacks Investigators and Critics

By Ron Shaffer

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The Church of Scientology is an organization that fervidly shuns investigations. When probed, it attacks the investigators. When criticized, it makes the critics pay.

Church attempts to stifle investigations and criticism include lawsuits, harassment, frameups and attempts to have critics jailed, or at least enjoined from talking about Scientology.

If there is "a long-term threat" to Scientology, founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote in a confidential memorandum to his staff, "you are to immediately evaluate and originate a black PR campaign to destroy the person's repute and to discredit them so thoroughly that they will be ostracized."

A black public relations campaign, Hubbard wrote in an earlier memo, involves an anonymous source placing "lies and derogatory data into public view."

Information from these and other church memos and documents, along with the complaints of some who have opposed the sect, provide an inside glimpse of some of the Scientology tactics at a time when the government is alleging that the church has broken the law.

Hubbard, 67, a former fiction writer who started the Scientology religion in the 1950s, make no distinction in some memos between an investigator and an attacker. Instructions to his followers make his demands clear.

"Never agree to an investigation of Scientology," he decrees. "Only agree to an investigation of the attackers . . . start investigating them promptly for felonies or worse . . . start feeding lurid, blood, sex, crime, actual evidence (sic) on the attackers to the press. . . . Make it rough, rough on the attackers all the way."

Reporters and government officials who look into Scientology have their intentions rooted in evil, according to some of Hubbard's memos.

"They have proven they want no facts, and will only lie no matter what they discover. So banish all ideas that any fair hearing is intended and start our attack with their first breath."

"There has never yet been an attacker who was not reeking with crime. All we had to do was look for it and murder would come out."

While the Church of Scientology has yet to disclose anything so sinister behind the current government investigation, it has made a number of attempts to take the offense.

Scientists have slapped a \$750 million suit on the government, alleging interference with their constitutional right to practice religion.

They have handed out cartoons depicting one judge as a Nazi and the chief federal prosecutor, Raymond Banoun, as a baboon. The Scientologists have accused Banoun of making "gross misrepresentations" about them, and have filed complaints about him with the D.C. Bar Association, the Justice Department's office of professional responsibility, and the White House.

The church has filed scores of motions here and in Los Angeles in an attempt to have the government's case thrown out. As those failed, the church announced it was forming a group to investigate the government.

The American Citizens for Honesty in Government (ACHG) as Scientologists called it, is supposed to spy on the government to expose "government crimes."

One of the church's news releases in recent months claims the current government investigation stems from fear the church will reveal these alleged crimes.

Three weeks ago the Scientologists held an unusual press reception to introduce some of the church's members who they felt were going to be indicted. Officials spent much of their time at this reception attacking the FBI for alleged excesses in its raids on the church's files here and in Los Angeles.

In the face of danger from government or courts, Hubbard wrote in one memo, "make enough threat or clamor to cause the enemy to quail."

"If attacked on some vulnerable point by anyone or anything or any organization, always find or manufacture enough threat against them to cause them to sue for peace."

Citizens critical of the church have found themselves hit with lawsuits. With some that has meant legal expenses of thousands of dollars:

- Nan McLean, a former member of the church, publically accused it of "brainwashing and enslaving people." She has been sued eight times for a total of more than \$5 million. Scientologists held a mock funeral in her Canadian hometown, complete with empty coffin and pallbearers, to pray for her soul.

- Lorna Levett, another former Scientology official, told a newspaper she had been used by the church to bilk followers out of money. Scientol-

ogy sued her for several hundred thousand dollars. She says she subsequently received in the mail, anonymously, a shark's tooth and a hangman's noose.

- The Clearwater (Fla.) Sun., the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and ABC television all have made investigations and reports on Scientology in recent years. They have been sued for \$1 million, \$2.5 million and \$10 million, respectively.

Gabriel Cazares, the former mayor of Clearwater, says he believes the church sues people primarily to punish them. He calls it "legal terrorism." Cazares, as mayor of Clearwater, spoke out against the church when Scientologists made large land purchases in his town. The church sued him for \$2 million. A federal judge last month dismissed the suit, but Cazares' lawyer estimated his legal fees at between \$40,000 and \$70,000.

Hubbard, in one of his memos, noted the usefulness of lawsuits.

"The purpose of a suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win," he said. "The law can be used very easily to harass, and enough harassment on somebody who is simply on the thin edge anyway . . . will generally be sufficient to cause his professional decease. If possible, of course, ruin him utterly."

Kenneth Whitman, a top church

official, said yesterday that many of the Hubbard's quotes were "developed from the point of view of being under attack." Hubbard's reference to using "black PR" was cancelled by a later memo, Whitman said. Other quotes have not been canceled, he said.

Whiteman said the church has sued only as a last resort. "They (the defendants) have persisted in printing or airing false information about the church, false reports originating from U.S. intelligence agencies," he said.

Some of those in the press who have been sued see the lawsuits as an abridgement of their First Amendment rights.

"It's nothing but an attempt to restrain free discussion about what they're doing," said Sidney Katz, an investigative reporter for the Toronto Star.

Evarts Graham, managing editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, said, "Anyone who seeks to punish by bringing large legal fees works to inhibit the free flow of discussion," he said. Post-Dispatch legal fees are approaching \$100,000 according to sources at the newspaper.

The church first demanded that the newspaper stop running its investigative series, and sued when that demand was ignored.

The Washington Post incurred some legal expenses earlier this year when the church served subpoenas on this reporter, demanding that all material used in compiling several stories on Scientology be turned over to the court. Both subpoenas were quashed.

In most other instances cited in this article, suits brought by the church have been dismissed, or are pending.

"We do not want Scientology to be reported in the press, anywhere else than on the religious page of newspapers," Hubbard said in one of his memos. "It is destructive word of mouth to permit the public presses to express their biased and badly reported sensationalism. Therefore, we should be very alert to sue for slander at the slightest chance so as to discourage the public presses from mentioning Scientology."

In his memos, Hubbard is explicit about the kind of dedication he expects from church followers.

"We're not playing some minor game in Scientology," he wrote. "It isn't cute or something to do for lack of something better. The whole agonized future of this planet, every man, woman and child on it, and your own destiny for the next endless trillions of years depends on what you do here and now with and in Scientology. This is a deadly serious activity."

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