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## Judge Backs Guilty Plea Bargain By Scientology Church Leaders

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8 (UPI) — A Federal judge today upheld a disputed agreement under which nine leaders of the Church of Scientology would plead guilty to a single count in connection with an alleged conspiracy to steal Government documents.

District Judge Charles Richey entered his ruling just 24 hours before the church members were to stand trial on a 28-count indictment. He ordered the opposing lawyers to appear Friday, "whereupon the court will pronounce its findings with respect to guilt or innocence of each of the accused" based on evidence the Government will submit this week.

The chief prosecutor, Raymond Banoun, said that the United States Attorney's office would file a notice of appeal contesting the validity of the plea agreement.

Lawyers for the church members, including Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of the church's founder, L. Ron Hubbard, had negotiated with the prosecutors over a possible plea in September, days before they were originally to stand trial.

The dispute arose over whether the defense lawyers had met the prosecution's 5 P.M. Sept. 23 deadline for accepting the terms of the agreement proposed by the United States Attorney, Carl Rauh.

### Assurances Asked

The judge, who conducted hearings last week, said the Government proposal allowed the church members to back out of their guilty pleas if they were not given

assurances against prosecution for the same offenses in other jurisdictions.

Church attorneys had sought the assurances before accepting the agreement, the judge said, and one defense lawyer telephoned Mr. Banoun "a few minutes after 5 P.M." to seek clarification. The lawyer accepted the plea on condition there be no further prosecutions. While Mr. Banoun refused to give such assurances, Judge Richey said they were "explicitly part of the offer."

Although the call from the church came after the 5 P.M. deadline, the judge ruled, Mr. Banoun made "a new offer without the time constraint" by asking whether the defense accepted the plea proposal.

Under the plea agreement, Mrs. Hubbard, second in command of the church, and Henning Heldt, Duke Snider, Gregory Willardson, Richard Weigand, Cindy Raymond and Gerald Wolfe, all members, would plead guilty to conspiring to obstruct justice.

Eleven church members were indicted more than a year ago on charges of conspiring to infiltrate Federal agencies and steal Government documents. Two members still are in England awaiting extradition proceedings.

### Denver Police Protest Ends

DENVER, Oct. 8 (AP) — The city's police department reported 100 percent attendance today after a two and a half day sick call protest by dozens of officers angered by the amount of a proposed pay increase.