

Scientologists' targets in Pinellas listed in files

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WASHINGTON — Six boxes of documents make it clear: People in Pinellas County — a newspaper editor, a reporter, a mayor, a state attorney — were targets three years ago of the "fair game" policy of members of the Church of Scientology.

The documents were among thousands seized by the FBI in 1977 raids on church headquarters in Washington and Los Angeles. They were the basis for indictments against nine church leaders on charges of conspiring to steal government documents and spy on the government.

The nine leaders, in a special plea arrangement, permitted themselves to be found guilty by U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey Oct. 26. The nine, including Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of church founder L. Ron Hubbard, did not contest the "sufficiency" of the government's evidence, although they did not certify its accuracy. They are awaiting sentencing. Once sentenced, they will appeal their convictions on grounds that the FBI raids were illegal and that their conduct was their only defense against government harassment.

JUDGE RICHEY not only released the evidence the government offered as a basis for conviction, but — over the objections of the defendants — he unsealed 39 cartons of documents seized in the raids. He did agree to review the documents before making them public, and so far has released six cartons.

In his courtroom Friday, while reporters, representatives of organizations that had conflicts with the church, and members of the church itself were sorting through the documents in the clerk's office, the judge once more denied a motion of the defendants to seal the evidence.

The church members' activities in Pinellas County were involved with the church's purchase of the old Fort Harrison Hotel in Clearwater for a headquarters. The purchase was made through a front organization, and conflict between the church and local newspapers developed when stories were printed about the purchase and activities of the church.

The church also was involved in a legal battle with Gabriel Cazares, then mayor of Clearwater.

Under the fair game policy enunciated in 1967 by founder Hubbard, a person declared fair game — an enemy of the church — can be "deprived of property, or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologist. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed."

AMONG THE six boxes of documents is a letter dated March 19, 1976, from "Randy" to "Dick." No last names were used. In the letter, Randy placed Eugene Patterson, editor and president of *The St. Petersburg Times*, among enemies of the church. *The Times* had written stories about Scientology, and had filed a suit in Washington seeking protection against harassment and

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intimidation of its reporters by church members.

Randy proposed a plan to discredit Patterson. The scenario covered six typewritten pages. Patterson, Randy said, had been chosen by Times Publishing Company owner Nelson Poynter to assume control of the company when Poynter died as long as he agreed to continue Poynter's policies.

The proposed program was "to cast doubt upon Patterson and the actuality of his continuing" those policies so that Poynter would "separate Patterson from his source of power."

A CHURCH MEMBER, a woman posing as a relative gathering information for a young man studying political science, would call Mrs. Patterson on the telephone and tape an interview with her. The questions would be cleverly phrased so that the answers could be made to appear to oppose Poynter and his policies. This interview would then be given to an "enemy paper."

"If the OP went down perfectly as planned," Randy said, "it could cause both Patterson and Poynter to be the laughing stocks of the newspaper world."

He labeled the proposed operation "OP Fickle."

Three days later Randy received an answer from "G. W." in which the operation was disapproved.

"I'm not all all certain this OP, even if done all the way through without bugs, would have enough of an affect (sic) to make it worth the resources expended," he said. "... Would anyone really be interested in such a story, and if so I think that media person would check directly with Mrs. Patterson to discuss the 'controversy' at which point Mrs. Patterson would deny that she meant such and such and would say it was taken out of context and then the story would crumble (not be printed)."

ON THE OTHER hand, a proposed operation against Mayor Cazares was given tentative approval.

In a letter to Dick and Greg, Randy said:

"Situation: The mayor of Base area is attacking the C of S.

"Data: This Base mayor is Mexican American and claims to have lived been (sic) raised on a Texas Border town ...

"The purpose of this OP is to actually get real documentation into the files of Mexican license bureau or bureaus, stating that the mayor got married in Mexico to some Mexican gal 25 years ago who is not his wife so puts the mayor in a position of bigamy. This can be accomplished either by a bribe or a covert action.

"Once the docs are planted, it is clearly exposed that the mayor is promiscuous and a bigamist (Italian Fog). If done well enough this shall greatly lessen his power in the Base area."

THE DOCUMENTS do not indicate whether any attempt was ever actually made to implement Operation Italian Fog.

Another letter among the church documents said Pinellas County State Attorney James Russell was taking an active role in an investigation of the church by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

"This looks like BAT&F were ready to drop the cycle," the letter said, "but Russell with his vested interest stepped in and kept the area hot. Documentation of this is needed as our data does not contain this."

Later, in discussing ways to cope with the situation, the letter writer said, "A project could

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be drawn up . . . It looks like Russell is going for a big win like he had on the Dare-To-Be-Great group prosecution he did a few years back, and considers Scientology just such a group, so I don't think he will fade into the woodwork without some planning on our part."

A WEEKLY REPORT on July 15, 1976, from Dick to Mo contained this entry:

"Situation: St. Pete Times reporter Bette Orsini has been covertly attacking us by continuing her investigation toward a possible entheta (unfavorable) article on Scn tax situation.

"Why: Br I Base has been collecting data on her only and not handling."

The documents go on to say that the Scientologists — angry that Mrs. Orsini was investigating their activities and tax-exempt status — made a plan to attack her by trying to embarrass her husband Andrew, executive director of the Easter Seal Society. Scientology agents had discovered that the Easter Seal Society had forgotten to file a routine annual corporation report with the state. They planned to use that information to anonymously attack the society and Andrew Orsini.

The document continues, "Handled: Preliminary investigation into her husband Andrew Orsini who is the head of Easter Seal of Pinellas County . . . This data is intended for a PR attack."

Anonymous packets of information containing the attack on Orsini and the charity were sent to several area newspapers. They purported to be from an anonymous citizen who wanted the information revealed in the public interest. But reporters who tracked down the packets found the trail actually led back to the Scientologists. None of the papers ever published stories about the information.

CHURCH OFFICIALS used a variety of codes for their communications. Copies of the codes are among the documents released by Judge Richey.

In one code, Mayor Cazares was "Te o Bill," reporter Bette Orsini "HAS," Patterson "EO" and Poynter "Dir I&R."

In another code, Cazares was "George Riversoll." In this code audit meant infiltrate, folder study meant investigation, worksheet referred to newspaper, and Alvin Connelly to Congress.

A long list of "LRH Orders" — six pages long — was issued in the spring of '76. They included:

"5-2-76. Cazares — possibly Jimmy Fischer could get his school records."

"5-3-76. Cazares — Is there some possibility the Cubans in MM might get the idea that he is pro Castro?"

"25-5-76. Cazares — Is it possible that he never became a citizen?"

A SIMILAR list headed "CSG Asst Info Orders" was dated Oct. 18, 1976. It included these entries:

"AG1 Flag. 21-7-76. CW Sun. What is the scene in CW re Molly being suspected as a plant?"

"AG1 F. 3-2-76. CW City Commission Candidates. Include Fulton in your investigation of Cazares."

"AG1 F 10-2-76. CW: Gabriel Cazares. Better find actual facts of his birth."

"AG1 F 11-3-76. Pinellas Cty Health Dept. Find out who was nattering about UCE women."

"PG1 US 26-4-76. CW Bob Snyder. You will have to extend investigation of him to other areas. Would like full time track."

"Base Coord SE. 8-9-76. BATE/Orsini data order investigation on how Orsini found out about B1."

SOMEHOW, APPARENTLY during an

illegal entry to an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office in Washington, the church obtained copies of correspondence between Mrs. Orsini and IRS officials in Philadelphia. In her letter she requested copies of certain forms in which the 14 divisions of the Church of Scientology claimed tax-exempt status. There was also a copy of the reply from Charles A. Gibb, chief, disclosure staff, in the office of the assistant commissioner, stating that the records would be forwarded to her from district offices.

Then, on June 9, 1976, Tom — Collections Officer Flag — sent a lengthy letter and seven documents to "Joe" — AG Info Flag. The letter was headed "Sensitively Obtained — Restricted Use."

The letter began, "As we know the St. Pete Times are involved in litigation against us in PT. The following represents some of their current activities and strategy, as well as communications in this regard." The letter went on to summarize the contents of the communications.

The communications, which apparently came from files of *The St. Petersburg Times* or an attorney representing *The Times*, included:

✓ A letter from Fielding M. McGehee III, editor of the Press Censorship Newsletter, an affiliate of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, to Mrs. Orsini requesting a copy of the complaint in *The Times'* suit against the church and background in the form of news clips. He said he intended to use the information in the next edition of the newsletter.

✓ A memorandum from Mrs. Orsini forwarding the request to *Times* attorney William Ballard and saying that "ECP (Patterson), RJH (executive editor Robert Haiman), and (Managing Editor) Andy Barnes say okay on sending them the material they ask."

✓ A memo that Ballard attached to the material he sent McGehee giving the status of the case.

✓ A copy of a six-page letter from attorney John M. Bray of the Washington law firm of Arent Fox Kintner Plotkin & Kahn "setting forth what I view as realistic goals of this lawsuit (against the church) and various options to achieve those goals." (A document released earlier in the case showed that a church operative illegally entered the offices of the Washington firm, but Bray said it would have been impossible for anyone to locate the file containing information about *The Times'* lawsuit.)

✓ A memorandum from Patterson to Ballard stating "for your files, here is a not very subtle example of Scientology's practice of taming the press through legal threat." With the memorandum was a copy of a letter from Frederick M. Rock, a church official in Clearwater, to Al Hutchison of the *Clearwater Sun* stating that he had personally forestalled any legal action by the church against the *Sun* and hoped peace between them would continue.

✓ A letter from Ballard to Poynter on May 3, 1976, regarding a subpoena to give testimony in the Cazares litigation.

✓ And a letter to Ballard from Jimmy Carter thanking him for his contributions to his presidential campaign and requesting more.