

# Russell inquiry angers Scientologists

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WASHINGTON—Top officials of the Church of Scientology considered Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney James T. Russell a major enemy because he pressed for an investigation about a gun found in Dunedin that may have belonged to sect founder L. Ron Hubbard.

An April 14, 1977, memo between two sect "guardians," on file in the U.S. Courthouse in Washington, shows that Russell was dubbed a "suppressive person"—making him a potential target for Scientology espionage and character assassination aimed at removing him from office.

Russell is mentioned in the guardians' correspondence on the "Clearwater guns scene." The letters are among thousands of documents released after nine sect leaders were found guilty Oct. 26 of widespread conspiracy against the federal government.

The guardians' exchange refers to a July 1976 seizure by Dunedin police of an illegal, high-caliber weapon with the initials "LRH" inscribed in the handle. Hubbard characteristically uses those initials.

The police confiscated the guns in

a temporary Scientology headquarters at the King Arthur Courts condominiums off State Road 580 just west of U.S. 19.

In August 1976, the memo states, investigators from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms visited the sect's Clearwater base in the former Fort Harrison Hotel to inquire about "guns the police found allegedly belonging to LRH."

The document states that the bureau's investigation turned up nothing, and the bureau was "ready to drop (it), but Russell . . . stepped in and kept that area hot."

Charges never were filed in the incident, however.

"Russell in Florida has been in all the investigations at base (the Clearwater Scientology headquarters) and appears to be connected to almost all of the major suppressive persons) at the base," the memo says. The memo was signed by "Cindy"—possibly guardian Cindy Raymond, among those found guilty of conspiracy by U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey last month.

Her memo is directed to fellow guardian "Dick"—possibly Richard Weigard, also found guilty of con-

spiracy.

The document asserts that Russell was involved in a "harassment" campaign against the Scientologists that was masterminded by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nathan Dodell and Paul Figley. Dodell and Figley's offices are among those the government said Scientologists raided for files.

In her memo, "Cindy" suggests that Southeastern U.S. sect officials "work out the handling of Russell, Dodell and Figley," all considered "major suppressive persons . . . that will continue to stir up attacks any chance they get."

"Handling"—a Scientology term for taking further action—would constitute following church policy for "suppressive persons, namely espionage, dirty tricks and character defamation," according to documents.

The "Clearwater guns scene" memo apparently is connected to a July 15, 1976, guardian office report stating, "Some of the bosses' guns are reported missing and have not been found."

The report adds: "A bill of sale has been drawn up so the boss won't be involved if the guns pop up some-

where."

A handwritten postscript says that "guns have been found safe," so it is unknown whether the gun discovered by the police had any link to the Scientologists' arms cache.

Russell could not be reached for comment about the incident. No further documents are available to determine whether Russell's "handling" ever was carried out.

But "Cindy's" report on the state

attorney concludes that because "it looks like Russell is going for a big win (in the gun investigation) . . . I don't think he'll fade into the woodwork without some planning on our part."