

Clearwater Sun

Pinellas County's fastest growing newspaper
Clearwater, Florida

Friday, May 7, 1982

Sect founder's son thinks dad is dead

By STEVEN GIRARDI
Sun staff writer

The son of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard said Thursday he thinks his father probably is dead, although "I have never seen his dead body or anything."

Ronald Edward DeWolf, the eldest son of the Scientology recluse, told Clearwater city commissioners that changes in the letters he has received from his father "leads me to believe he just possibly might be dead, but I just don't know."

The letters, he said, began changing in 1975 "and more recently, some of the letters I've received have changed in syntax." He said his father had a distinctive "way he put words together" which he would recognize immediately.

DeWolf, who at 18 helped his father set up some of the early Scientology ground rules, said he has not seen Hubbard since 1959 but has received a steady flow of correspondence.

If his father is still alive, he said, he has no idea where he might be or who is with him.

DeWolf, who turns 48 today, left the organization in November 1959 when his wife, "who gets angry once every five years," offered him a choice between Scientology or her and the children.

"Zip! Off we went," said the red-haired, fair-complexioned DeWolf, who changed his name after breaking from the sect.

In a hallway interview following his testimony, DeWolf said he walked out of the sect's Washington D.C. headquarters without saying goodbye to his father.

"You don't say goodbye to L. Ron Hubbard," he said, lighting a menthol cigarette. "He was in Melbourne, Australia. I threw a resignation letter in the mailbox as we drove out of town to Los Angeles."

He called his father a "paranoid, schizophrenic, megalomaniac—if it's physically possible to be all of those."

DeWolf said he never dreamed Scientology would reach the power it has, but said his father did. And as for possible guilt feelings about controlling the lives of so many people, DeWolf suggested his father has none.

"Does a king worry about being a king?" he asked.

DeWolf said that when he left the sect he did not know how to perform at a regular job and had difficulty finding work. He since has found a job in the security division of a Carson City, Nev. hotel casino.

Told Wednesday's first witness in

the hearings also works in a Nevada casino, DeWolf smiled and called the business a "great deprogrammer." Three times he hopped on the floor as he laughed and told of what a former Scientologist faces in a casino.

"OTs (advanced Scientologists) think they can do it all—see through walls, leave their bodies and fly to other countries, travel to distant stars," he said. "They look at a Black Jack table and figure they can do it. They lose it all. It puts their feet back on the ground pretty quick."

DeWolf said he leads a quiet life and does very little physical activity: "I watch a lot of television."

He said he belongs to the Episcopal Church. He has six children, none of whom are involved with Scientology.

But as an expert on the workings of Scientology, he said he "enjoys just sitting around talking about it."

He said he liked the Clearwater hearings and hopes his testimony will "keep a few more people out of hell."

"It may sound a little strange, but to me the subject is boring. And then at times, I say 'Gosh! I thought everybody knew that.'

"I'd hate to be known for only one thing in my life. I'd like to get into something else, but I don't know what.



RONALD DeWOLF

... letter syntax changed

Public speaking, maybe. People have convinced me I have something important to say."