

St. Petersburg Times

Florida's Best Newspaper

MAY 7, 1982



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ST. PETERSBURG TIMES - MAY 7, 1982

Scientology foes lambaste each other

By JOHN HARWOOD
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CLEARWATER — L. Ron Hubbard Jr., now known as Ron DeWolf, and Paulette Cooper agree on at least two things.

Each says Scientology is a fraud.

Each says the other is untrustworthy and out to make a buck from criticizing Scientology.

"He's such a liar," Ms. Cooper said of DeWolf. Later she referred to DeWolf's father, Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, and added, "He's a chip off the old block."

DeWolf said he holds a similar view of Ms. Cooper.

HE SPECIFICALLY referred to a period in the early 1970s when both were working to expose Scientology abuses. "She lied to me a great deal," he explained.

DeWolf and Ms. Cooper are two of the estimated 20 witnesses who Boston lawyer Michael J. Flynn has assembled in Clearwater this week in his attempt to convince the City Commission of Scientology's "fraudulent, commercial and criminal practices."

DeWolf, 47, who left Scientology in 1959 and now works



Ron DeWolf says of Cooper: ". . . if a ship was sinking, she'd step on the fingers of children to get to the lifeboat."

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at a Carson City, Nev. hotel, told commissioners during public hearings Wednesday and Thursday that his father had fabricated the vast majority of his claimed research credentials.

Ms. Cooper, a New York free-lance writer whose book *The Scandal of Scientology* made her the object of a church smear campaign, said she was scheduled to testify today.

Each gave the *St. Petersburg Times* opinions of the other's trustworthiness during breaks in the hearings.

Ms. Cooper said she thought DeWolf had told the commissioners the truth in attacking his father's credentials. But generally, she said, he is untrustworthy, and she wondered if he will change his version of Scientology's origins in the future.

"I'LL BE very curious to see what side he's on a year from now," Ms. Cooper said.

She added that DeWolf has been ostracized by other anti-Scientologists because "everyone's been burned by him."

"There's no one who's talking to him other than Flynn these days," Ms. Cooper said.

She added that she believes DeWolf testified at the hearings to gain publicity, in hopes of going into business as a "deprogrammer" — someone who persuades people to leave so-called "cult groups" — for fees of \$1,000 to \$1,250 a day.

DeWolf agreed that he would like to get into the "deprogramming" business, and that he wants to write a book, explaining that "you've got to make money somehow."

But he said Ms. Cooper is also trying to make money criticizing Scientology. He accused her of charging people \$750 to let them examine Scientology documents in her possession.

"Paulette Cooper is the kind of person who, if a ship was sinking, she'd step on the fingers of children to get to the lifeboat," DeWolf said. "She doesn't care who she harms."

Ms. Cooper said that while both were working to expose Scientology, DeWolf took documents she had given him and sold them to the Scientologists.

DEWOLF AGREED that he had turned over some such documents, but said it was because Ms. Cooper had claimed he was not actually L. Ron Hubbard Jr.

"As I said," Ms. Cooper concluded, "we don't like each other."

Asked about the statements of DeWolf and Ms. Cooper, Flynn said he thought they were unimportant because they were not offered in testimony before the commission. He told a reporter it would be "unprofessional" to write about them.

But he said the "instability or lack of it" of both DeWolf and Ms. Cooper would be understandable considering their experiences with Scientology.