

Loss of Papers in Scientology Case Called 'Mental Rape'

By MYRNA OLIVER, Times Staff Writer

Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of Church of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, testified Monday that she considered the taking of the couple's personal letters and other documents by a former church archivist akin to "mental rape."

The church and Mrs. Hubbard, former controller of the worldwide organization, are suing the archivist, Gerald Armstrong, for return of some 20 boxes of personal papers now in the custody of the Los Angeles County clerk pending outcome of the trial. She testified on the third day of the non-jury trial before Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Paul G. Breckenridge Jr.

Her voice shaking with anger, Hubbard said under questioning by her attorney, Barrett S. Litt, that she was "outraged" to discover that Armstrong had taken materials from Scientology storage facilities at Gilman Hot Springs near Hemet without her authorization.

"My own personal storage had been entered without my permission. It had been pawed through," she stormed. "Things were taken to give to Mr. Flynn (Armstrong's Boston attorney, Michael Flynn) who in my estimation I consider to be a receiver of stolen goods. All he does is go around the country and try to drum up suits against the church. He tries to destroy my religion. You would feel outraged. Anyone would feel outraged."

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summer, agreeing to abandon the biography and return any documents in his possession.

Asked by Litt if she had ever approved Armstrong's going through the couple's personal papers or taking them to Garrison, Mrs. Hubbard said, "No, I did not in any way, shape or form. I consider my materials to be stolen. And that's the truth."

A man in the street would feel outraged."

Asked by Litt what one phrase she would use to describe the removal of documents by Armstrong, she snapped: "Mental rape."

"Someone comes in and ravishes your personal belongings," she continued. "Here I am having to be in court, I mean really, to get them back. I mean that is outrageous."

The prim, middle-aged woman seemed most upset about loss of investigator's notes and an autopsy report concerning the death of her son, Quentin, and letters between a young woman named Alexis Hollister and L. Ron Hubbard questioning whether Hubbard was Hollister's father.

Armstrong has claimed that he had the Hubbards' permission to act as researcher for an authorized biography of L. Ron Hubbard by a writer named Omar Garrison and was collecting papers for Garrison.

When Armstrong found information in the documents that caused him to believe Hubbard has misrepresented his war and scientific background, he said he became disillusioned and left the church, taking some of the documents, which he shared with Garrison. He claimed he needed the documents to defend himself against church accusations of rumor mongering about Hubbard.

Garrison reached a settlement with the church last

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Mrs. Hubbard testified that she last saw her husband of 32 years in August, 1979, has no idea of his whereabouts and doesn't even know anybody who knows where he is. She said she has continued to write him personal letters, which her aide takes to a mailing service, but does not believe he receives the letters.

Flynn has repeatedly asked Breckenridge to dismiss the suit for failure to make L. Ron Hubbard a party in the case . . . a move the judge has denied as premature.



FTZGERALD WHITNEY / Los Angeles Times

Mary Sue Hubbard as she left court Monday.

Although many, including his son, Ron DeWolf, speculate that Hubbard is dead, a Riverside judge last year declared that the science fiction-writing religionist is alive and "in seclusion" by choice. Church attorneys have said he is unavailable to appear in the current case and have submitted a letter authenticated as Hubbard's asking that his papers be returned to the church.