



## Writer tells of Hubbard's 'faked past'

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LOS ANGELES—An author hired to write a biography of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard testified Wednesday that he is not "an image maker" and he refused to write a "puff piece" on the reclusive 72-year-old.

Omar Garrison described himself as "an honest reporter (and) biographer (to whom) anything about the subject is grist for the mill" during the trial of a former Scientology archivist accused of stealing 10,000 documents the Clearwater-based sect contends it owns.

"The Church (of Scientology) has provided all sorts of biographical sketches of Mr. Hubbard,"

Garrison said. But by the time he started work on his manuscript, "I had read all the biographies and had heard they were not accurate," he said, adding that his planned work was to be "absolutely accurate."

However, Garrison was not in the courtroom at the time of his testimony; he wasn't even in California. In a curious twist, Scientology attorneys read Garrison's sworn testimony into the record. Garrison is believed to be at his home in Cedar City, Utah.

According to his testimony, Garrison said he was hired in October 1980 to write a personally authorized biography of Hubbard. After he realized that some published accounts of Hubbard's life were

inaccurate, he said, he refused to "repeat all the falsehoods they (the Church of Scientology) had perpetuated over the years."

Garrison's testimony came in a trial that pits the sect and Hubbard's wife, Mary Sue, against Gerald Armstrong. Armstrong is a former sect member reportedly appointed by Hubbard to gather materials for Garrison to use in his book.

The sect and Mrs. Hubbard are suing Armstrong for the return of five boxes of documents, pictures and letters in the custody of the Los Angeles county clerk pending the outcome of the trial.

Armstrong, a Scientologist for 11 years, took the documents when, as appointed archivist, he discovered they proved Hubbard had misrepresented him-

self over the years by fictionalizing his personal background, military exploits and educational achievements.

Garrison reached an out-of-court settlement with the sect last summer, returned all the documents still in his possession and agreed not to publish the biography, which he had nearly completed.

But Armstrong turned over to Boston attorney Michael Flynn reams of documents that Mrs. Hubbard and the Church of Scientology of California claim as their personal and legal property.

At issue is whether Armstrong, who says Hubbard authorized him to gather the material, has any legal

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### \* Hubbard

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claim to the documents, or whether he stole them from the sect when he disassociated himself from the organization, as the plaintiffs claim.

Garrison was the last of the prosecution's witnesses to be heard before sect lawyers rested their case Wednesday.

"I was going to be a good historian and write what I believed to be true, even if it didn't correspond with previously published information on L. Ron Hubbard," Garrison recalled of the project.

During negotiations for the book, "I pointed out gross misrepresentations (about Hubbard) and I wanted it (the contract) brought into line with all other garden variety" contracts which give writers free rein to write what available facts indicate.

After two years of negotiating, Garrison went ahead with the project with the help of archivist Armstrong, whom he called "an extremely efficient researcher" and a man with "an extraordinary memory (and) astonishing recall."

Garrison said he has about 14 books to his credit, several of which he has written at the request of the Scientology organization.

Although he mentioned what he believes are discrepancies in previous Hubbard biographical sketches, Garrison did not elaborate on such allegations. And despite sect claims that Garrison was contractually bound to return upon request the volumes of files and papers, Garrison said such was not his understanding.

Further, he said, he would not have returned much of the material because he planned to keep some of the documents "to protect myself from

future suits."

Garrison said he discovered around Christmas 1981 that Armstrong had left the sect. But the two continued to work "very closely" in exchanging information pertaining to the book.

Garrison said he was distressed when he learned that Armstrong had given thousands of the documents to attorney Flynn, who represents about 20 parties involved in litigation with the sect.

When Armstrong told Garrison that the sect had told him to "get a lawyer," the author feared that the Scientologists may try to take by force the documents he had in his possession. He said he began to take the material with him wherever he went.

"It was like Scrooge and his ledgers," the writer recalled.

But sect lawyer Barrett Litt said there was no

contract between Armstrong and Hubbard. Litt said that Armstrong, 37, had no legal right to take the papers and give them to Flynn.

"Mr. Armstrong took advantage of his relationship with Omar Garrison," Litt told Superior Court Judge Paul G. Breckenridge during the non-jury trial. "... He went to Garrison knowing that he was no longer acting on behalf of the church and had no authority whatsoever" to take any documents.

"He didn't take them for his own case, he took them for other cases and he even agreed to be a witness for Mr. Flynn in other cases."

Breckenridge, in denying Flynn's motion to render a verdict of not guilty, apparently agreed with Litt's interpretation of the events and commanded the defense to move ahead with its case.