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THURSDAY, May 17, 1984

Sect lawyers attack archivist's testimony

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LOS ANGELES—Church of Scientology lawyers began their cross-examination of Gerald Armstrong in Superior Court here Wednesday, trying to prove he continued collecting sect-related documents after a temporary restraining order prevented him from doing so.

Sect lawyers also began eliciting testimony from Armstrong, a former Scientology archivist, that he joined the Clearwater-based church not because of his belief in founder L. Ron Hubbard, as Armstrong testified, but because he be-

lieved in the organization and its technology.

It was Armstrong's fifth day of testimony during the trial brought by the Church of Scientology of California, which is demanding the return of 10 thousand documents the 37-year-old man took in December 1981.

Armstrong, a Scientologist for 11 years, took the thousands of papers, records and recordings he collected while helping in the production of a biography of Hubbard. He has testified that they prove the reclusive, 73-year-old has systematically misrepresented himself for more than 40 years.

Armstrong testified it was his belief in Hubbard's numerous claims of heroism, scientific discoveries and educational accomplishments that attracted him to the worldwide organization. But the documents, he says, prove many of those claims false.

"Basically, we're trying to show that Mr. Armstrong joined the Church of Scientology because he believed in Scientology," said sect attorney Barrett Litt. "He joined because he found something to believe in Scientology."

"His claims about Hubbard just won't hold up under cross-examination," Litt predicted.

The attorney walked Armstrong through his claims about Hubbard's alleged misrepresentations, asking him again to state specifically the contradictions he believes the court-sealed documents revealed.

The lawyer then went over Armstrong's introduction to Scientology, the books he read, the courses he took and his feelings about what the sect offered him.

Armstrong said he "was interested in finding out about" Scientology after reading books and talking with organization members in his Canadian hometown during the summer of 1969.

He joined the Vancouver, British Columbia, branch later that year and acknowledged that sect lectures, tenets and beliefs were "useful and helpful" to him.

"But it was more its promised usefulness" that attracted him, Armstrong explained. After six months of study, "I had not solved (several particularly burdensome problems), but I was told later that what I sought would happen."

Attorneys say they expect their cross-examination of Armstrong to continue through next week. Then Armstrong's attorney, Michael Flynn, plans to have several other former Scientologists testify for the defense.

Trial

(from page 1B)

tion Service. "There is one action I could use some help on, and that is a letter of employment by the Church..." Armstrong requested.

Litt wanted to know if that meant Armstrong needed a letter stating that he worked for the Church.

"No," Armstrong said, explaining that the request was for other sect officials who were having problems with the INS.

Litt and Armstrong discussed contracts, checks, directorships, corporate organization and past discussions, all of which pertained to the Church of Scientology. Through it all, Armstrong maintained his only employer was Hubbard.

Armstrong did acknowledge changing the date on a Xeroxed Oct. 15, 1980, letter to Mary Sue Hubbard in which he made suggestions how various "church organizations" could aid in the biography project.

When Litt produced the original letter, on which the date had clearly been changed to Oct. 31 and White-Out used to change the first paragraph, Armstrong explained his superior had made suggested changes.

He said he made the changes, altered the date and forwarded the letter to Mrs. Hubbard.

When Litt introduced a letter from Armstrong's superior saying, "Right now, you are working for CSC and supported by SOR (Sea Organization Reserve bank account)," Armstrong acknowledged that "ostensibly" they were his employers.

"That's who I was working for, ostensibly," he said, adding that a number of sect corporations were created so that "Mr. Hubbard could—at arm's length—control Scientology organizations."

But sect spokesman Sandy Block scoffed at Armstrong's claims, saying Scientology lawyers "have the documentation to prove that he worked for Scientology."

Armstrong's trial, now in its third week, continues today when sect lawyers are expected to continue their cross-examination of Armstrong. Lawyers for both sides say the trial is expected to last through next week.

20
SEE 18 MAY 84