

# Los Angeles Times

Friday, June 22, 1984

## Ex-Church Aide Cleared in Taking of Scientology Data

Editorial Pages

CCT/Part II

By MYRNA OLIVER, *Times Staff Writer*

A former Church of Scientology archivist was absolved late Thursday of any liability for taking thousands of personal documents belonging to the organization and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, and his wife, Mary Sue Hubbard.

The church had sought unspecified monetary damages and return of the documents, which have been impounded by the Los Angeles County Superior Court for the last two years, in its civil suit against Gerald Armstrong, 38, a 12-year church veteran who became disillusioned with Hubbard and left the church in 1981.

However, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Paul G. Breckenridge Jr. ruled in a 12-page opinion mailed to attorneys that Armstrong had not invaded the Hubbards' privacy, ille-

gally converted the documents to his own use in other litigation or breached his duties to the church to keep the material confidential.

Breckenridge said Armstrong was justified in taking the documents to protect himself against a church declaration branding him a "suppressive person . . .," a thief and a liar for discrediting Hubbard's purported background as a war hero and renowned scientist.

He based the ruling on case law that provides that "an agent is privileged to reveal information confidentially acquired by him in the course of his agency in the protection of a superior interest of himself or a third person."

The judge said about 500 of the previously sealed documents that

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became exhibits in the five-week trial will be considered public record open to public inspection or use in other lawsuits. Documents not used in the trial and kept under seal will be retained by the court until Armstrong's \$15-million countersuit against the church for alleged fraud and misrepresentation is tried.

Church attorney John Peterson labeled the opinion "lunacy" and said he would begin appellate proceedings today, including asking the 2nd District Court of Appeal for an immediate stay to keep the exhibits secret.

"The judge obviously was swayed by bias, animosity and emotion," Peterson said.

Julia Dragojevic, who represented Armstrong along with Boston attorney and veteran Scientology fighter Michael Flynn, said she was "thrilled" by the ruling. She added that Armstrong's wife, Jocelyn, had cried at the news and that Armstrong himself "was rather speechless."

"He didn't know what to say," Dragojevic said of her vindicated client. "But then he said it was really everything he had hoped for."

The judge praised Armstrong and other ex-Scientists who testified as "credible, extremely persuasive . . . precise, accurate."

However, he was extremely critical of Scientology itself and Hubbard, based on evidence received during the trial.

"In addition to violating and abusing its own members' civil rights," he wrote, "the organization over the years with its 'Fair Game' doctrine has harassed and abused those persons not in the church whom it perceives as enemies. The organization clearly is schizophrenic and paranoid, and this bizarre combination seems to be a reflection of its founder. . . ."

"The evidence portrays a man," Breckenridge wrote, "who has been virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements. The writings and documents in evidence additionally reflect his egoism, greed, avarice, lust for power and vindictiveness and aggressiveness against persons perceived by him to be disloyal or hostile."

Describing Mary Sue Hubbard, who claimed removal of documents by Armstrong amounted to "mental rape," as a "pathetic individual," Breckenridge said, "Her credibility left much to be desired."

# San Francisco Chronicle

THE LARGEST DAILY CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Los Angeles

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The church had sought unspecified monetary damages and return of the documents — impounded by the Los Angeles County Superior Court for the past two years — in its civil suit against Gerald Armstrong, 38, a 12-year church veteran who became disillusioned with Hubbard and left the church in 1981.

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gally converted the documents to his own use in other litigation, or breached his duties to the church to keep the material confidential.

Breckenridge said that Armstrong was justified in taking the documents to protect himself against a church declaration branding him a thief and a liar, for discrediting Hubbard's purported background as a war hero and renowned scientist.

The judge said that some 500 of the previously sealed documents which became exhibits in the five-week trial will be considered public record open to public inspection or use in other lawsuits. Documents not used in the trial and kept under seal will be retained by the court until Armstrong's \$15 million countersuit against the church for fraud and misrepresentation is tried.

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"The evidence portrays a man who has been virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements," he added.

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