

Ex-lawyer, N.H. man charged in plan to bilk Church of Scientology

By William F. Doherty
Globe Staff

FBI agents yesterday arrested a New Hampshire man and a disbarred lawyer on charges of extorting \$33,000 from the Church of Scientology by offering false information about a scheme to steal \$2 million from the church.

George T. Kattar, 67, of Meredith, N.H., formerly of Methuen, was held without bail pending a detention hearing tomorrow. Harvey Brower, 49, of Swampscott, a former lawyer turned writer, was released on \$50,000 bail.

According to an indictment issued by a federal grand jury in Boston, Kattar and Brower obtained the money from church officials by offering to provide them with information about a forged \$2 million check drawn on an account of L. Ron Hubbard, the church founder.

Kattar and Brower allegedly offered the information - which proved to be false - in return for a \$100,000 fee, one-third of which was to be paid in advance.

The indictment does not specify what information was allegedly supplied by the defendants in return for the \$33,000.

Kattar and Brower, according to the indictment, used threats of violence. The scheme allegedly occurred between September and December 1984.

In January 1984, full-page advertisements were placed in The Boston Globe, The New York Times and other publications offering a \$100,000 reward for information that would help determine who presented the forged check to the Bank of New England in June 1982. A teller questioned the check's validity and it was not cashed.

Harry L. Manion 3d, a lawyer for the church, said yesterday the indictment is only "the tip of the iceberg."

He said "the church believes this is the beginning of the unraveling of the circumstances surrounding the forgery."

Argued against bail

In arguing that Kattar be denied bail, Assistant US Attorney Brackett B. Denniston 3d said that releasing him before trial would pose a danger to witnesses and the community in general.

Denniston said Kattar "put out a contract on a cooperating witness in the case," and, in conversations that were secretly tape-recorded, he discussed killing witnesses in other cases.

The prosecutor said one church official was told by Kattar: "Pay up or I'll drop your name in a hat."

The tapes were reportedly made by another disbarred lawyer, Larry Reservitz, who has cooperated with federal investigators in several cases following his conviction on drug charges.

Besides extortion, the indictment charged Kattar and Brower with three counts of wire fraud and one count of receiving stolen funds.

They pleaded innocent to all the charges at a hearing before US District Magistrate Lawrence P. Cohen. Their trial was scheduled for July 16.

Seized 131 guns

During an unrelated raid on Kattar's home last month, FBI agents seized 131 guns and military supplies. The armaments included three homemade explosive devices, a number of machine guns, an Israeli submachine gun, automatic weapons, shotguns, rifles and handguns.

Also found in the raid, the FBI said, was the name of an individual who lives in Lebanon. Investigators said they planned to trace the origin of the weapons and attempt to determine if any of the guns were intended for shipment to Beirut.

Kattar has been a real estate developer and trucking company executive for the past 20 years.

Brower, a lawyer for 17 years with offices in Lawrence, was disbarred in August 1979 for cheating a client of \$15,000.

Brower has represented the late Raymond L.S. Patriarca and several other high-level figures in organized crime. He served six months in prison in 1979 for conspiring to help a client jump bail in Louisiana and escape to Mexico. In 1982, Brower was fined \$3,000 for conspiring to operate a bookie syndicate.