

12-7-90

Scientists protest at IRS office

By Bill Davis

Tribune writer

Squeal on your boss, get \$10,000. That's the message three Church of Scientology members tried spreading to Internal Revenue Service employees about noon Thursday outside the Tempe IRS office at 40 W. Baseline Road.

Saying the IRS is covering up its blunders and that it's costing taxpayers "billions of dollars," the church members tried handing out toy whistles and brochures that promised up to \$10,000 for information on fraud and corruption involving IRS officials.

The noon hour came and went however, and no IRS workers left through the doors the three Scientologists were standing by.

"We knew this would happen. If they follow true to form, no one comes out when they find out we are out here," said Michael Suggs of Phoenix. "We are counting on people having enough integrity and that \$10,000 will be enough of an incentive for people to blow the whistle on the IRS' shoddy practices."

Scientologists since the early 1970s have been at odds with the IRS. The agency has challenged members' tax returns, saying they cannot claim charitable deductions on some money they pay for church-sponsored courses, materials and other costs associated with church. The 35-year-



PAUL O'NEILL/Tribune

Ginny Clark, a Scientology follower, hands out protest literature in front of the IRS office in Tempe.

old organization was founded by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, who died in 1985.

In 1976, IRS and FBI agents raided a Scientology office in Los Angeles and seized church records. Several

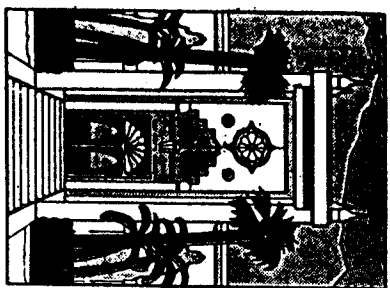
church leaders were jailed for failing to turn over information to the IRS.

"That was eventually overturned. A victory for religious freedom," Suggs said.

Ginny Clark of Phoenix and a

Scientologist for about a year said the Scientologists handed out pamphlets as members of the National Coalition of IRS whistle-blowers, which was formed in 1985 by the church's Freedom magazine.

Glendale



NEWS Press

Saturday, Dec. 29, 1990

25 cents

Judge orders Ritalin attorneys to pay \$27,000

By Hector Gonzalez
Staff writer

A Glendale Superior Court Judge on Friday ordered the plaintiffs' attorneys in the Ritalin lawsuit that ended in a mistrial to pay \$27,000 in legal fees to the Glendale Unified School District and the county of Los Angeles.

Robert Brenna, one of two attorneys for plaintiff Adalia Lorenzo, said he will appeal the decision by Judge Joseph Kalin.

"We feel the order is dead wrong and we're confident that the appeals judge will overturn it," Bren-

Lawyers say they can't afford to pay that amount and will appeal decision

na said.

Gary Gibeau, the attorney for the district, filed the motion to recover more than \$25,000 in legal fees expended in defending against the lawsuit.

Gibeau couldn't be reached for comment Friday.

The county of Los Angeles and attorneys for Dr. Alvin Yussin, the county doctor who prescribed Ritalin to Lorenzo's son, filed to re-

cover more than \$34,000 in legal costs.

The \$27,000 in sanctions against Brennan and attorney Rick Moxon would be split between the district and the county attorneys.

But Brennan said he is counting on a reversal of the decision. He said neither he, nor Moxon can afford to pay the amount.

Brennan, who has been in practice for three years, said he specifi-

cally told Kalin an award of sanctions to the defendants would financially cripple his firm.

"There's no way that my firm has that kind of money," he said.

The lawsuit involved allegations by Lorenzo that district officials coerced her into putting her son on Ritalin, a drug used widely to treat hyperactivity in children.

But the suit ended in mistrial Dec. 6, after Kalin ruled the plain-

tiff's attorney inappropriately tried to paint a picture of blatant racism on the part of district officials against the Lorenzos.

Kalin said there just wasn't enough evidence to prove the accusation.

At a hearing on the motion for sanctions last week, however, Kalin said he believed the plaintiff still had possible grounds for a lawsuit, but one based strictly on

whether school officials followed proper procedures in dealing with Michael Lorenzo and whether the boy was properly diagnosed by county officials.

Brennan said Friday he and Moxon intend to refile the lawsuit in a different court jurisdiction.

He said a hearing on the appeal of the \$27,000 judgment could take several months.

HEALTH

Prozac Said To Spur Idea Of Suicide

By MICHAEL WALDHOLZ

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

NEW YORK—The popular drug Prozac, widely hailed as safer than other antidepressants, is being accused of causing suicidal thoughts in some users.

Yesterday, a New York woman sued the drug's marketer, Eli Lilly & Co. of Indianapolis, charging that she caused her to commit acts of self-destruction and to make attempts at suicide. The suit, filed in state court in Suffolk County, New York, seeks \$150 million in damages.

"This 'wonder drug' has produced some nightmarish results," says Leonard L. Finz, a New York attorney representing the woman. "We claim the drug wasn't properly tested [and that] warnings of its horrendous effects haven't been made to the public."

The lawsuit is the first of its type against the drug, but it follows observations by several researchers that the drug may inspire suicidal thoughts.

Eli Lilly says it doesn't comment on matters in litigation. But a spokesman acknowledges that in May the company alerted doctors to several newly observed problems associated with the drug's use, including "suicidal ideation." The spokesman says the alert was part of the company's periodic updating of the drug's side-effect profile. He also says "Prozac has received a lot of publicity," including being on the cover of Newsweek and New York magazine, but that Eli Lilly believes "information about the drug should be communicated to people by their doctors, not the media."

Officials at Lilly and the Food and Drug Administration say that the charge that the drug may induce obsessive thoughts of suicide is troublesome because it may be impossible to determine whether Prozac or the patient's underlying mental status is at fault.

The drug's association with suicide was first formally reported in February in the American Journal of Psychiatry by Martin Teicher, a Harvard University research psychiatrist. Dr. Teicher's article identified six people who developed "intense, violent suicidal thoughts" while taking Pro-

Please Turn to Page B4, Column 4

Prozac Said to Cause Thoughts of Suicide For Some Patients

Continued From Page B1

zac. None of the patients had previously experienced such thoughts, the article said.

In an interview, Dr. Teicher said the drug produced "intolerable" anxiety in which thoughts of self-destruction were a natural consequence. "I think for some patients the drug is going to cause a real problem," Dr. Teicher says. He adds that since the report's release he has been told of 15 additional cases.

Prozac's problems may be due, at least in part, to its success, and to overzealous prescribing by some doctors. Sales of the drug are growing at a rate unprecedented for a relatively new medicine. First released in late 1987, Prozac is expected to zoom to \$700 million in sales this year and more than \$1 billion next year, making it by far the best selling drug for depression. Marketing officials suggest more than a half million prescriptions are being written for it each month.

Yesterday, Eli Lilly cited the rapid growth of Prozac when it reported that its earnings increased 26% in the second quarter from a year earlier.

A Flood of Complaints

But the drug's unusually swift rise to prominence and its use by tens of thousands of patients has triggered a flood of complaints about side effects to doctors, the FDA and Eli Lilly. Several former users who say the drug caused severe reactions have formed a nationwide self-help group. And a Los Angeles-based consumer organization associated with the Church of Scientology says it has received more than 800 calls from patients this year claiming the drug caused such problems as severe edginess, mania and suicidal obsessions.

Officials at the FDA and Eli Lilly say they are monitoring the reports but don't believe the number or types of complaints are especially unusual for a drug used to treat people afflicted with mental health problems. Lilly also says it believes some of the complaints are being drummed up by the Scientology group, which has a history of criticizing the use of psychiatric drugs. Prozac's descriptive label for doctors provides a lengthy list of side effects, from nausea, nervousness and insomnia to mania and extreme agitation. Most of those problems are also associated with other commonly used antidepressants.

"At present, our reporting system hasn't picked up [suicidal thoughts] as a problem more common than might be expected in this population of users, especially given the drug's high rate of use," says Paul Leber, the head of the FDA's division of neuropharmacological products.

Source of Information

It was Dr. Teicher's article in February that suggested to Mitchell Banks, a Long Island psychiatrist, that Prozac might be causing problems for his patient, Rhoda Hala.

Mrs. Hala, the woman now suing Eli Lilly, says she was given the drug in late 1988 to treat depression following back surgery and side effects caused by painkiller drugs. Soon after first taking Prozac, she became overwhelmed with self-destructive impulses, she says, slashing her wrists and other parts of her body "hundreds of times."

Mrs. Hala, 40 years old and married with two children, was hospitalized several times for her behavior. Her doctor also increased her dosage of Prozac. After she stopped taking the drug, she says, her suicidal impulses disappeared. Mrs. Hala says she was never depressed before the back surgery and hadn't had suicidal thoughts before. She was taking a tranquilizer called Xanax while on Prozac, but Prozac's label doesn't specifically warn against this combination of medicines.

Some prominent research psychiatrists say the drug can't be judged by such anecdotal reports. "The drug is a good antidepressant," says Jerrold Rosenbaum, a psychiatrist associated with Harvard and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "But it may be found that some people are especially sensitive to the drug's mode of action, which differs from other antidepressants."

No Heart Problems

Prozac works by increasing the availability of a chemical, serotonin, that carries signals between nerve cells. The drug quickly gained favor among psychiatrists, not because it relieves depression better but because it doesn't produce constipation or the other annoying problems caused by the other medicines. It also doesn't cause the heart problems linked to other drugs.

"Patients can't hurt themselves easily by taking an overdose," Dr. Rosenbaum says, "and that's a real concern when treating" depressed patients.

Some researchers suggest that increasing serotonin may drive some people to severe and intolerable edginess and that such problems must be closely watched by doctors. But some critics of the drug's widespread use say doctors aren't being so careful.

Michael O'Brien, an activist with the Citizens Commission on Human Rights in Los Angeles, says some people are being given the drug for experimental uses that have been described in research reports but haven't been approved by the FDA.

The organization, associated with the Church of Scientology, has been very active in collecting reports of adverse reactions related to Prozac. Mr. O'Brien was recently contacted by Susan Carey of Jensen Beach, Fla., who says she was given Prozac by a doctor to help her quit smoking. She says she soon became manic, going on spending sprees and ignoring her work and family. The problems ended when she quit taking the drug, she says.

Eli Lilly is also testing Prozac as a weight-loss drug for people with severe weight problems, and doctors believe the drug is already being prescribed to some people for this use. Other drug makers have noted Prozac's success, and several are testing similar-acting medicines.

Only in L.A. By Steve Harvey

O utspoken Rep. Robert K. Dornan (R-Garden Grove), who subbed for syndicated broadcaster Rush Limbaugh this week, obviously hasn't had as much practice as Limbaugh when it comes to reaching for the "kill-switch." That's the time-delay device that enables talk-show hosts to blip out obscenities uttered by callers.

In the midst of Dornan's stint, broadcast on member station KFI, one caller branded the congressman a "Nazi" before he was cut off.

Luckily, there was no chance of that caller's adjective getting past Only in L.A.'s "kill-switch."

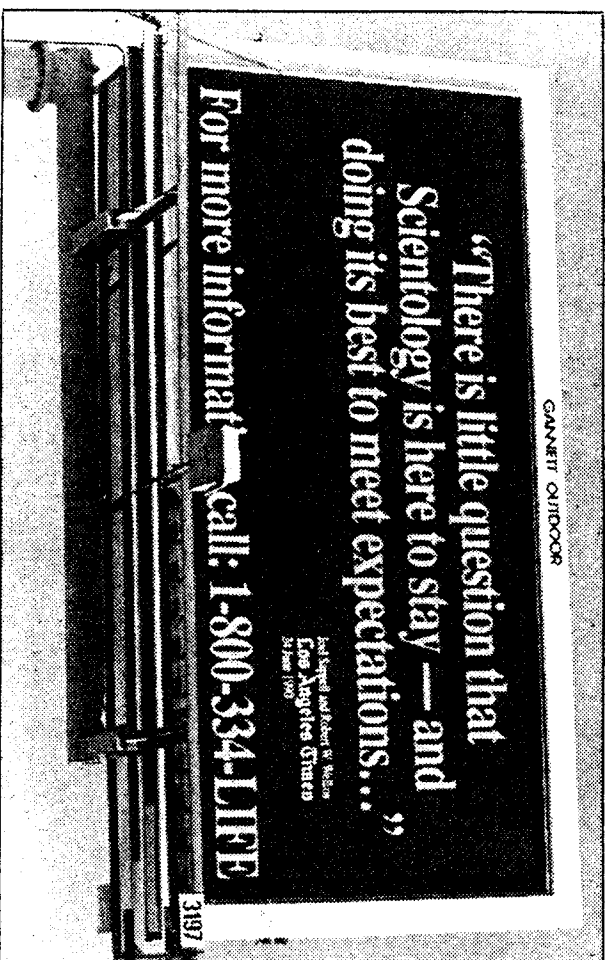
Movie-makers have been known to isolate positive-sounding blurbs from unfavorable reviews and quote them in ads.

The Church of Scientology, whose controversial inner workings were recently revealed in an analytical six-part series in *The Times*, seems to have taken a similar tact.

Scientology is now running ads on billboards and RTD buses that say:

"There is little question that Scientology is here to stay—and doing its best to meet expectations. . . ."—Joel Sappell and Robert W. Welkos, *Los Angeles Times*.

A spokeswoman for the movement replied: "The *L.A. Times* gave the Church of Scientology widespread exposure and now we return the favor."



The Church of Scientology gives the Los Angeles Times some exposure.

MIKE MEADOWS / Los Angeles Times

photo taken in Hollywood's Barnsdall Park by Jerry Martz.

Can it be that interest in a seminar with the compelling theme "Malibu: Microcosm for Surfing's Future" is at low ebb? Hard to believe but that may be the case. Geosurf Symposium 1990 originally announced a \$90 ticket price for today's event at Pepperdine University. Since cresting at that figure, the price has plunged to \$15.

Winner of this week's Dueling Signs Competition is the head-spinning

Incidentally, the "Beverly" Glen street sign, pictured here recently, has been corrected, if it was, indeed, a misspelling. Kerem Bilge, a psychology major at nearby UCLA, points out that "bever" in British English means "tremble" or "shiver." He noticed the "Beverly" spelling during that nervous period