

THE MIAMI HERALD

Sunday, Jan. 30, 1983

City, Scientologists fighting new battle in 7-year-old war

By JOHN THOR DAHLBURG
Associated Press Writer

CLEARWATER — Clad in white button-down shirts and royal-blue pants, they have fast become Clearwater's most famous and identifiable residents — the same ones Mayor Charles LeCher mocks as "the mental cripples" and "the cretins."

Scientologists brought their jargon-laden faith, missionary drive and money-making zeal to the decaying downtown of this tranquil Gulf of Mexico resort 7½ years ago. In secrecy, they bought an aging stucco-faced landmark, the Fort Harrison Hotel, and snapped up other downtown real estate.

Since then, the mayor has toted a .38-caliber handgun and donned a bullet-proof vest, make-believe Nazi storm troopers have goose-stepped under the palms, thousands of demonstrators have choked the streets and sun-washed Clearwater has been ripped apart by a bizarre war of religion.

This month, the Clearwater City Commission tentatively passed a law purportedly regulating charitable solicitation in the city, but in reality targeting alleged misrepresentation and misuse of donations by Scientologists.

Church lawyer Paul Johnson, who had accused Clearwater officials of running roughshod over the Scientologists' constitutional rights, said he would sue the city over the

ordinance imposing a six-month jail term for people knowingly giving false information to the city attorney and up to \$5,000 in fines for anyone convicted of deceiving a donor.

The lawsuit would be the latest in a string of legal skirmishes triggered when the Scientologists, believers in a space-age creed dictated by former pulp fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, converted the 10-story Fort Harrison into their "Flag Land Base," — a shrine, mission and retreat for the 2.5 million worldwide members said to adhere to Scientology.

Some of the religion's top brass and clergy once lodged at the chandelier-festooned Fort Harrison have been convicted or accused of illegal acts, ranging from the theft of government documents and the planting of undercover "moles" inside hostile newspapers and businesses to smear campaigns mounted against opponents.

Eleven church leaders, including founder's wife Mary Sue Hubbard, were found guilty 3½ years ago of plotting to infiltrate federal agencies and purloin government documents. The Scientologists "were involved in a widespread conspiracy to subvert not only the government but the judiciary as well," claimed a Justice Department brief.

Clearwater erupted in anger and

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panic when documents seized in Los Angeles by the FBI indicated some top Scientologists had drafted plans "for taking control of the key points in the Clearwater area," including the chamber of commerce, lawyers' offices, medical societies, hospitals, police and the state attorney's office.

Then Mayor Gabriel Cazares was also targeted, the documents show, in "Operation Speedy Gonzalez" — a staged hit-and-run accident designed to ruin him politically.

Church spokesman Hugh Wilhere says the days of illegal actions by top Scientologists are "ancient history" and never were more than the abuses of a few pushed to criminality by the fear of religious persecution.

But in many households in this 100,000-resident resort, the Church of Scientology and 1,500 disciples of L. Ron Hubbard said to live here still inspire apprehension, distrust and even fear.

"When you think of Rome, you think of the Pope. When you think of Salt Lake City, you think of the Mormons. Now, when people hear Clearwater, they're starting to think of Scientology," LeCher declares. "But that's only natural — they've bought up 11 per cent of our downtown. And they're still buying."

"I believe the Scientologists are a group that is trying to take over our city," said City Commissioner Rita Garvey. "The impression I get is that whenever they have bad publicity, they just mount a whole public relations campaign saying they've changed."

Have the Scientologists changed? The U.S. government is wary. In 1980, a U.S. attorney in Washington accused church leaders of learning nothing from the successful prosecution of its officers, and of pursuing plots to destroy or intimidate "anyone who is critical of them."

Neither do many who have fled the church — including L. Ron Hubbard's eldest son, 47-year-old Ron Dewolf, once executive secretary for the U.S. church and now an apartment manager in Carson City, Nev.

Scientists cite changes; city officials skeptical

"My father only knew how to do one thing and that was to destroy people," said Dewolf, who changed his name because of its associations with Scientology.

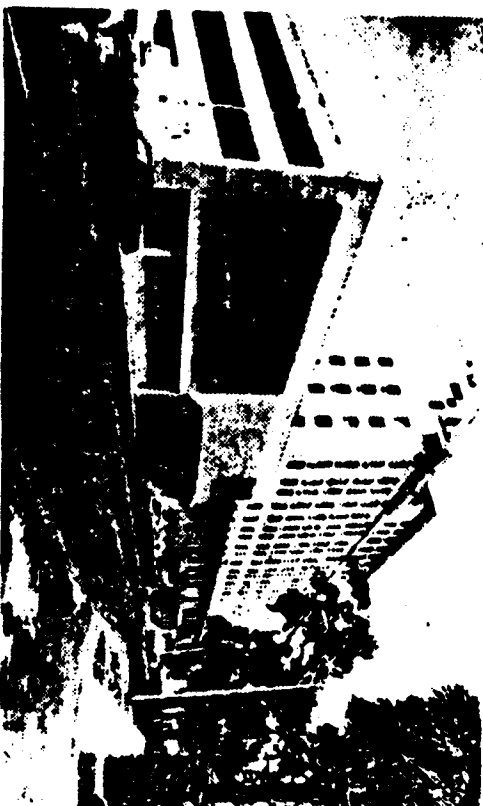
But at Fort Harrison and throughout Clearwater, the accent is on change. Billboards, newspaper ads and radio spots plug the Hubbard creation called "Dianetics," billed as "the modern science of mental health." The new messages make little or no mention of Scientology.

"We're just a quiet law-abiding group going about our business," says Wilhere.

But City Hall remains unbelieving. "Every time we send a building inspector or a health inspector to the Fort Harrison, not to mention the police, they seem to know beforehand," LeCher says.

To take the pulse of Scientology, the Clearwater City Commission held a \$110,000 series of public hearings last year that were lambasted by church spokesmen as "an inquisition."

"The issue is whether a city commission should get into investigating a religious organization for activities conducted by a handful of its members," said Tampa attorney Mike Hayes, one of a bevy of lawyers retained by the Clearwater church.



The old Fort Harrison Hotel in Clearwater is now the headquarters for the Church of Scientology.

Associated Press

"It was a witch hunt, with no guidelines whatsoever," Hayes said. LeCher justified the hearings by insisting on "the public's right to know" and the need to lay legislative groundwork to justify the need for new city ordinances.

"We've had rumors of unreported deaths, unreported marriages and a secret hepatitis epidemic inside the hotel. We wanted to find out what goes on inside," the mayor said.

LeCher's avowed goal is to "boot the Scientologists out of here." Failing that, he wants to tax and regulate the church like a business and enact consumer-protection laws to

"the people at the top were more psychotic than the people coming in."

The sensational accusations aired at City Hall were categorically denied by church officialdom. Opposition also came from the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Council of Churches, the latter protesting Clearwater's "vendetta" against the sect. Opinion-makers like The Clearwater Sun and the St. Petersburg Times also blasted the hearings.

Wilhere claims the city commission's campaign has "worked to our advantage" by "turning off a lot of people" to Scientology's enemies. At the Fort Harrison, "we're undergoing tremendous expansion," as the faithful jet in from around the world for religious instruction that can be paid for with a Visa or MasterCard credit card.

"We've returned to what we do best; that's being a church." Wilhere said. Gone are the days when Scientologists dressed up like Nazis and paraded through the streets in an attempt to liken bigotry in Clearwater to Hitler's Germany.

But the undeclared war continues, and plans in City Attorney

Thomas Bustin's office include ordinances to regulate the number of inhabitants living in group housing and a ban on further purchases of downtown property by nonprofit groups like the Scientologists.

"I think great damage has been done to their business-making capabilities," says LeCher. "I would hope that they may leave to save

face." Last November, Pinellas-Passop Circuit Judge B.J. Driver ordered the church to pay \$325,578 in back property taxes it owes on more than \$9.5 million in real estate. The church's 1982 application for tax exemption is being probed by the state attorney's office for possible false information.

alert donors and believers alike that their religion has never substantiated some of its claims. Beamed into Pinellas County homes by cable television and reported by local newspapers and TV stations, the five days of legislative fact-finding electrified this seaside town.

Defectors from Scientology painted a lurid tableau of a multinational racket disguised in the vestments of a religion and a paranoid leadership.

"If Hubbard decides to leave this planet, he'll take the others with him — they'll take the Kool-Aid," testified Edward Walters, 44, referring to the self-genocide in Guyana of 913 members of Jim Jones' People's Temple.

Walters said he quit the church in disillusionment after discovering

Trial challenges liability of church

By Maya Bell

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

DAYTONA BEACH — Assessing punitive damages against the Church of Scientology or any church would inhibit the organization's ability to practice as a religion, a lawyer argued Tuesday in Volusia Circuit Court.

Because innocent parishioners would foot the bill, the church — like any municipal government — must have immunity from paying damages designed to punish an errant individual, said church lawyer Paul Johnson.

The Tampa attorney asked Circuit Judge Robert Durden to bar former Clearwater Mayor Gabriel Cazares from seeking punitive damages from the church for whatever wrongs a former church member might have committed.

Durden is expected to issue a ruling next week.

In 1976, Cazares sued the church, several lawyers and the founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard,

alleging malicious prosecution, abuse of process and invasion of privacy.

He said the church sabotaged his campaign for election to Congress.

The church originally sued Cazares, claiming his opposition to its relocation in Clearwater violated civil rights laws. That suit was dismissed as frivolous in federal district court.

Cazares' three-count complaint, filed in Pinellas County, was transferred to Volusia County several years ago because of extensive publicity.

The case is now in pre-trial hearings. Durden has dismissed the first two counts, rulings that have been appealed. The third count, now under consideration, accuses the church of instructing its legal adviser, Merrell Vannier, to solicit Cazares and his wife as clients and inform on them to the Scientologists.

Vannier's wife, Francine, also is accused of acting as a church agent when she volunteered to work for Cazares' congressional campaign.

The church, Johnson contended Tuesday, cannot be held liable for any misconduct the Vanniers may have committed.

"Merrell Vannier, if he did wrong ... will have to pay for his wrongs," Johnson said.

"But why should the thousands or millions" of church members "have to pay for his wrongs? It's going to be punishing the wrong people and have a tremendous impact ... on the carrying on of religion."

Assessing punitive damages against the church would violate the right to freedom of religion because parishioners would be reluctant to make church contributions and therefore impair religious activity, he said.

The constitutional separation of church and state also would be violated because, in assessing punitive damages, the assets of the church would have to be evaluated, Johnson said.

"That would represent a significant governmental intrusion into the church," he said.

Cazares' lawyer, Tony Cunningham of Tampa, countered that the question of punitive damages was a matter for the jury to decide.

He also argued that the constitutional right to freedom of religion cannot be justified by practices "in conflict with public morals and peace and safety."

Vannier "surreptitiously and maliciously" used the client-attorney privilege to "spy" on the Cazares at the behest of the church and "that is against public morals, peace and safety," Cunningham said.

He also dismissed the argument on the separation of church and state by saying that the activities by Vannier and the church were secular.

"Spying, using the attorney garb ... to infiltrate these people's lives was in no way a religious matter."

RELIGION TODAY BY WILLIAM F. WILLOUGHBY

Antireligion and the Press

One of the funniest things I remember from my youth was a story of a couple of fellows who were raiding chicken houses at night. Chickens being the social squawkers that they are, it was impossible to get into and out of the chicken house, even at night when chickens ordinarily are quiet, without a big noise erupting. This naturally aroused the farmer from his sleep.

As the night-time cackler thieves crouched in among the chickens when the farmer approached, they trembled. There was no escape.

"Who's in there?" the farmer demanded, his shotgun cocked for emphasis. Suddenly one of the would-be thieves blurted out in his most convincing falsetto voice: "They ain't nobody in here but us chickens!"

Not since some of the same media announced a dozen years or so ago a similar alarm, "God Is Dead!" have so many who knew so little of the personage in question been caught up in the claque and clamor of a supposed cadaver.

The truth of the matter is that L. Ron Hubbard isn't dead. He's too busy trying to meet publishing deadlines and trying to straighten the world out in its myriad of aberrations to take time out to die.

But wouldn't you know it! The poor fellow had to take time out to write a letter to the court in his own handwriting, and then deliberately affix his fingerprints in a very precise type of ink just to prove that he is alive.

A number of experts, both in analyzing handwriting specimens and in studying fingerprints, then examined the letter and the prints and said they indeed were products of the living. Dead men sort of clam up when it comes to handwriting and submitting to fingerprinting.

This was enough for the judge, but there was a certain element of the press which was skeptical still. The theory was advanced about the fingerprints, that yes, they indeed were L. Ron Hubbard's, but that they were fingers which had been kept in formaldehyde, preserved for such a time as this.

Besides being one of the most prolific and most prodigious writers (Washington used to be his domain) in science fiction, a technique called Dianetics, and his magnum opus titled "Battlefield Earth," Hubbard best is known as the founder of Scientology. And that ain't good.

That's what the press generally thinks, and they've printed volumes upon volumes themselves about this mysterious, and to them, crack-pot, founder of one of the world's fastest growing religions. Try to print something that is deliberately honest about Hubbard or his religion and it's virtually impossible. Either that, or readers think the reporter has been "bought" by the Scientologists.

What has brought on this spate of talk about L. Ron Hubbard being dead is the fact that an indefatigable lawyer antago-



L. Ron Hubbard is known as the founder of Scientology.

nist has used Scientology defectors (deprogrammed or voluntary) to go after Scientology in court to the tune of millions of dollars. Now it is Hubbard's long-estranged son who is swearing that his father is dead, and that he is heir to his father's estate.

I for one am glad that Hubbard hasn't succumbed to coming out into the open to prove that he is alive. Stick to your writing, Ron. With all those books he's turning out, and all those famous memos he dispatches as advice for the church, and with that fingerprinted letter he wrote to the judge, what more does it take for a man to prove he is alive?

Heber Jentsch, a longtime friend and president of the Church of Scientology International, I think, puts his finger on what the real problem is — why a salacious segment of the press is ever so eager to put the worst light on any religious leader it doesn't necessarily like. He calls it journalistic terrorism. And part of the problem is that religionists as a whole have not awakened to the fact of what is going on.

"We have not defined...the religious theology of religious freedom," Heber said, that is, what it is freedom from freedom to in the realm of religious liberty.

"That is why in some ways the courts have become the focal point, given this lack of definition. They have been (used as) the forum to attack religion in the United States and a virulent segment of the press is seeking to infect the rest of the media with this antireligious virus.

"The media doesn't realize that the inoculation which would save them from this virus is contained in the other half of the First Amendment (protecting freedom of press) which supports religious freedom. The only protection then, is that the media start to recognize that men of good will and of good conscience are to be supported rather than vilified."

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Heber sees that salacious element of the press as being inoculated with a virus that will do no one in America any good, a "psychiatric morality" much akin to Nazi morality and that of Leninism rather than a morality which is traditional, built on the premise that man is more than a mass of mud or, at best, a beast, but a being of dignity, living as if he were related to God.

"The psychiatric morality," he said, "is that Hinkley is not responsible, for attacking the president, wife swapping is sex therapy, mass murderers are to be protected and religion is dementia."

But breathe easy, L. Ron Hubbard. No matter what the press says about you being dead, don't let that get you down. Get those writing contracts fulfilled.

But one thing, Ron: The next time you write a note to the judge, do write a little more clearly. Your handwriting is simply atrocious.

Omaha Church Of Scientology Breaks Off Ties

By Lynn Zerschling

World-Herald Staff Writer

Omaha's Church of Scientology has severed all ties to the mother church, some of whose leaders have been convicted of burglarizing and spying on government agencies.

"What does this have to do with religion — burglary, espionage? How does that better mankind?" asked Scott Duncan, executive director of the 80-to-100-member congregation at 5016 California St.



Duncan

Duncan said the church cut all legal ties to the Church of Scientology last October — the first congregation in the country to make that move. Since then, Duncan said, four congregations in California have broken off.

He said the Omaha congregation, which renamed itself the Church of Scio Logos, has been maintaining a low profile because of feared harassment from the Church of Scientology leaders.

Precautionary Measures

"We have put in a lot of precautionary measures," Duncan said.

Telephone calls are screened. A receptionist doesn't identify the church to callers.

In recent weeks, Duncan said, about two dozen members of his congregation have been receiving what he termed harassing telephone calls from Church of Scientology members. He said the members were told if they didn't rejoin the mother church, "your eternity will be black."

Duncan said "spies" from the Church of Scientology have tried to infiltrate his congregation.

"You feel threatened. There is an implied threat if you go against them," said Duncan, 28, who has headed the local church for three years.

Because of a concern about retribution, he said, he only recently has discussed the reasons for his church's break.

Terrible Mix-up

"We're not hiding anything," he said. "There's been a terrible mix-up between the philosophy (of Scientology) and the irrational, illegal, criminal actions of the Church of Scientology."

According to news accounts, those activities have included:

—The disappearance of the Church of Scientology's founder, L. Ron Hubbard, 71, a Tilden, Neb., native, science fiction writer and millionaire who was last seen in 1980. Hubbard's third wife, Mary Sue, and some leaders claim to have heard from Hubbard. Hubbard's estranged son said he thinks his father is ill and mentally incompetent. Others said Hubbard is dead.

—In Hubbard's absence, some of his young followers have taken over control of the church, purging longtime leaders.

—The Internal Revenue Service is demanding \$6 million in back taxes and penalties.

—About two dozen civil suits have been filed against the church by former members who claimed to have been swindled, harassed or kidnapped.

—On Jan. 7 Mrs. Hubbard, 51, was sentenced by a federal judge to serve four years in prison for her role in directing a conspiracy to steal government documents about the church.

Infiltrate Agencies

—Other church leaders have been convicted on charges stemming from a church-directed program to burglarize, bug and infiltrate various federal agencies that the church considered its "enemies." Those agencies included the IRS, Federal Trade Commission, Drug Enforcement Administration and the Labor, Justice and Treasury Departments.

—Under Hubbard's direction, a paramilitary organization was formed that included secret police and a group to spy on the secret police.

Since it was founded 14 years ago, the Omaha Church of Scientology has always gone its own way, Duncan said.

"I, Ron Hubbard is not some kind of guru that we're following blindly," Duncan said. "That's not the case, at least for members of this church. The rest of the church went into a kind of blind following. My view of him is that he discovered something."

He said Scientology's aim is a world without insanity, criminals and war.

Series of Courses

In reaching those goals, Duncan said, church members take a series of courses to obtain levels of spiritual attainment.

The Church of Scientology "charged an arm and a leg" for those courses, Duncan said.

The average church member spends between \$10,000 and \$20,000, he said. The total program would cost about \$100,000, he estimated.

While Duncan called the teachings "priceless" and crucial to his spiritual development, he said, "I think it's wrong to charge that much. . . . Scientology has been a business disguised as a church."

Los Angeles Times

Friday, February 11, 1983

/Part I 3

Church Officials Offer Note as Proof Founder Is Alive

By RUSSELL CHANDLER, *Times Religion Writer*

In a move to quell rumors that Church of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard is dead, officials of the controversial religion Thursday released a copy of a letter purportedly handwritten by the reclusive science fiction writer within the last 10 days.

The original letter, complete with a set of fingerprints said to be Hubbard's, has been filed in Los Angeles Superior Court in conjunction with a case in which the church has accused a former member of stealing biographical material belonging to Hubbard.

Church President Heber Jentzsch said at a press conference that affidavits by two handwriting analysts who studied the script, the ink and the fingerprints "proved" that Hubbard, 71, is the author of the letter. Jentzsch told reporters that the letter was written to the court and said Hubbard owns the contested documents.

The Church of Scientology, one of the most wealthy to be founded in the last 30 years, is torn by a power struggle between an inner circle of young leaders and a growing number of

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HUBBARD

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disaffected members and holders of "mission" franchises.

Ron DeWolf, Hubbard's eldest son—estranged from his father since he left the church in 1959—filed a court petition last November alleging that Hubbard is dead or is not competent to handle his vast fortune. DeWolf asked the court to name him trustee of his father's estate.

Hubbard has not been seen publicly since early 1980, and although Jentzsch has repeatedly said that Hubbard is alive, no church official has acknowledged seeing him since then. Officials say Hubbard is a "private person" who should not be forced into public appearance. Also, they cite security as a reason for his seclusion.

Jentzsch said a unique ink prepared by a forensic expert and sent in a pen to Hubbard's secretary on Feb. 2 is in fact the same ink found on the letter now on file in court. The clerk for Superior Judge John L. Cole said the judge will not make any comment on the letter or its authenticity.

Note is evidence founder still alive, Scientologists say

United Press International

LOS ANGELES — The Church of Scientology attempted Thursday to quiet claims that its founder, L. Ron Hubbard is dead, releasing what officials said was a handwritten note from the recluse to prove he is alive and well.

A letter dated Feb. 3 and signed L. Ron Hubbard was submitted Tuesday to Superior Court Judge John Cole in connection with a Scientology suit against a former church leader, according to court and church officials.



L. Ron Hubbard

Church President Heber Jentzsch said affidavits by two experts prove conclusively that Hubbard, 71, is alive — contrary to allegations by Hubbard's son and former church leaders.

"We have proved that he is alive," church attorney John Peterson said.

Hubbard's eldest son, Ron DeWolf, filed a court petition in Riverside County in November

alleging his father is dead or mentally incompetent to handle his fortune. DeWolf, who has not seen his father since leaving the church 23 years ago, wants the court to make him trustee of Hubbard's estate.

An affidavit by Howard Doulder states that he analyzed the handwriting and several fingerprints on the letter and concluded the letter is authentic.

Forensic expert Richard Brunelle states in a second affidavit that he prepared a distinctive ink and sent it to Hubbard's secretary Feb. 2. Brunelle said the ink used on the letter to Cole is the same ink, proving that it was written after Feb. 2.

Asked why Hubbard did not appear publicly, the officials said he is a "private person" who should not be forced into public appearances.

Jentzsch said Hubbard resigned in 1966 from the church he founded in 1948 but still sets policy. Jentzsch, who estimated church assets at \$279 million with a worldwide membership of 6.5 million, said he has not seen Hubbard for several years.

DeWolf contends nobody has seen Hubbard since March 1980. Former church officials have said its membership probably is about 700,000.

Scientology is based on Hubbard's concepts of mental health, first propounded in a 1948 book called *Dianetics*. Through use of an "E-Meter," an instrument that works somewhat like a lie detector, individuals are offered exercises and counseling aimed at eliminating negative mental images and achieving what Scientologists call a "clear" state. Adherents may spend as much as \$100,000 achieving that state at "auditing" sessions.

Religious group sues lawyer for \$42 million

By DIANE KATZ
Daily News Staff Writer

The Church of Scientology has filed a \$42 million damage suit against the son of the church's founder, church officials announced Monday.

The suit filed Friday in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles charges Michael Flynn and his associates with abuse of the court system.

"In that lawsuit the attorneys are putting forth all of the instances to date we have of his (Flynn's) abuse of the court system in order to line his pockets with money," said John G. Peterson, lawyer for the church.

Church officials allege Flynn and his co-attorneys attempted to extort a \$1.6 million legal settlement from the church by threatening it with more than 150 lawsuits unless the church agreed to their terms.

Responding to the suit, Flynn said, "It is just absurd. I question the validity of everything they do. They do things just to get press attention.

"They have victimized people for years. I represent people who's children have been killed as a result of their involvement with scientology, people who have been framed by them," Flynn said.

A suit filed last year against Flynn by the church was dismissed by U.S. District Court Judge Consuelo B. Marshall. But the dismissal allowed the church to refile its suit.

Flynn is representing Ron DeWolf, son of church founder L. Ron Hubbard, on a petition seeking to have DeWolf made trustee of his father's estate.

DeWolf claims his father is either dead or mentally incapacitated.

A missing person's petition is scheduled for trial on April 18 in Riverside County.

Barrett Litt, attorney of record in the probate case, announced Monday he has filed a motion to dismiss DeWolf's petition based on a letter from L. Ron Hubbard stating "I am alive and well."

"Today we have filed with the court a motion asking that the petition filed by Ron DeWolf be immediately stricken from the record as a sham petition.

"We have submitted the various authentication materials to the court and in addition we have submitted other evidence showing that Mr. Hubbard's affairs are well managed," Litt said.

The letter, addressed to Judge David Hennigan, states Hubbard hardly knows his son and disputed DeWolf's claims that the Hubbard fortune was being mishandled by church officials.

Hubbard's lawyers contend the authenticity of the four-page handwritten letter has been determined through handwriting analysis, timed-ink dating and a check of Hubbard's fingerprints.

"This letter conclusively proves he (Hubbard) is not missing. L. Ron Hubbard is very much alive," said Stephen Lenske, Hubbard's attorney.

Hubbard has not been seen in public for several years and his attorneys said he is too busy writing to make a public appearance in court to settle the controversy of his existence.

... the United States and Canada.

Flint Journal Feb 15, 1983

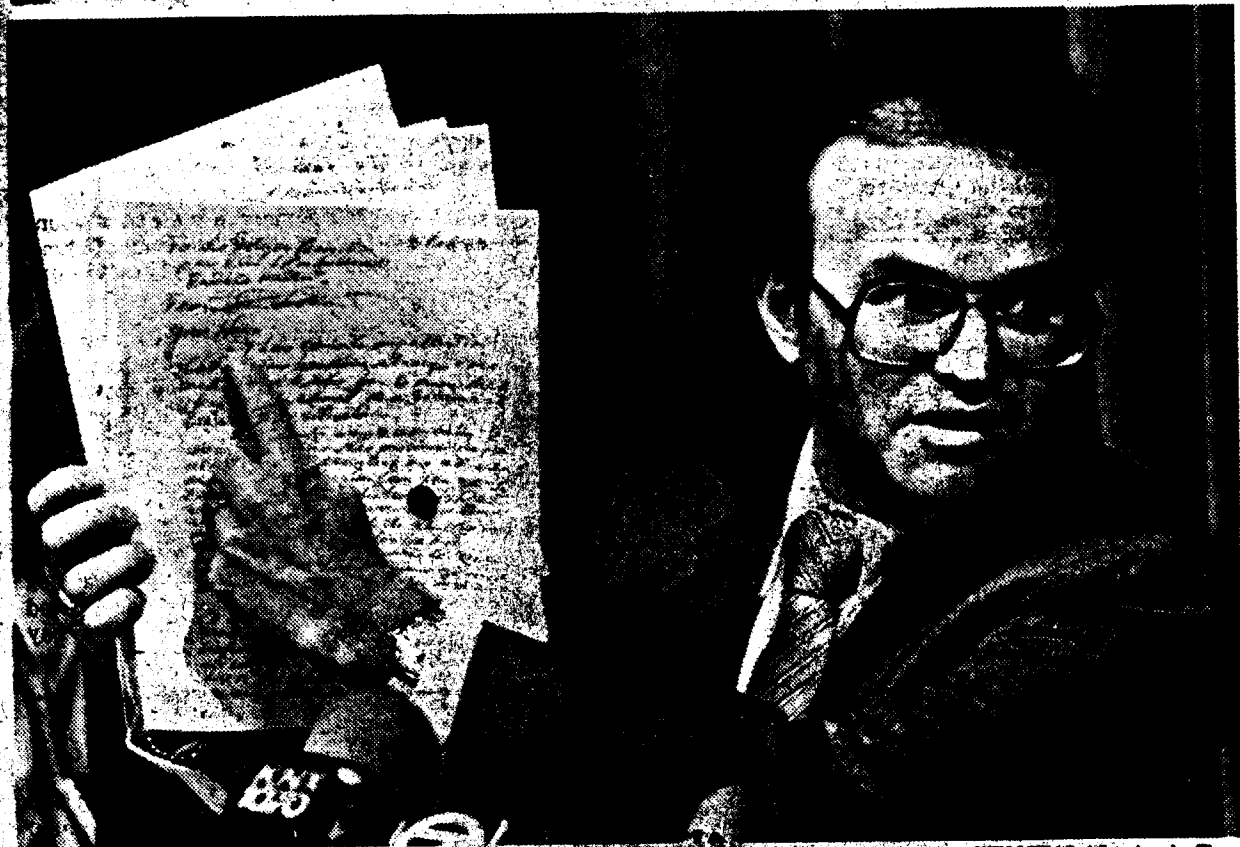
□ The attorney for **L. RON HUBBARD** says the reclusive founder of the Church of Scientology has asked a judge in a handwritten letter — his second in a week — to dismiss a suit filed by his son that claims he is dead. "I am alive and well," Hubbard wrote the judge. Attorney Barrett Litt said Monday he filed a petition in Riverside, Calif., Superior Court to dismiss the probate case filed by Hubbard's son, Ron DeWolf, who asked to be named trustee of his father's estate. In a letter addressed to Judge David Hennigan, Hubbard, 71, stated he hardly knew his son and disputed DeWolf's claims that his fortune was being mishandled by church officials. "... I want to reassure you that I am alive and well and working at my own trade." Attorneys for Hubbard and the church obtained affidavits from ink, handwriting and fingerprint experts stating both letters were authentic.



Los Angeles Times

★ Tuesday, February 15, 1983/Part 1 3

Los Angeles Times



KEN LINDAS / Los Angeles Times

Pointed challenge—Sherman Lenske, attorney for Church of Scientology, holds up letter in Riverside courtroom that was purportedly written by church founder L. Ron Hubbard. Letter was the second presented in effort to counter

probate petition filed by Hubbard's estranged son, Ron DeWolf, who contends his father is dead or mentally incapable of managing his vast fortune. In a separate action, the church sued DeWolf's attorney for "abuse of process."

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For the Record

A photo caption in The Times Feb. 15 erroneously identified Sherman Lenske as attorney for the Church of Scientology and said Lenske was photographed in a Riverside courtroom. Lenske is the attorney for church founder L. Ron Hubbard, but not the church itself, and was photographed at a press conference in Los Angeles.

Church founder breaks 15-year silence

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

DENVER — L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Church of Scientology, broke a 15-year silence to assure his followers he is alive and to restate his opposition to nuclear proliferation, the Rocky Mountain News reported.

In its editions today, the newspaper published Hubbard's written answers to questions submitted by a reporter through his attorneys. Hubbard wrote a cover letter in his own hand, assuring the paper it had "an exclusive," and "to alleviate any concern others may have" about the inter-

view's authenticity.

Hubbard also wrote two letters to California courts assuring them he is "alive and well and working at my own trade." Hubbard's estranged son, Ronald DeWolf, filed petitions last November asking his father be declared dead or mentally incompetent.

"The last time I saw (DeWolf) was, I believe, in 1959 in Washington, D.C.," Hubbard said. "He would not be in a position to know about me or the church or my activities or related matters."

Hubbard's attorneys have claimed he is too busy writing a 10-volume sequel to *Battlefield Earth* to appear in court personal-

ly to clear up the question of his well-being. In his letter, Hubbard said he could not take time away from his writing chores.

"As a writer, to do one's job, one can't be involved in the constant noise and hurly-burly of distracting things," he said.

Hubbard also dismissed claims his financial affairs and personal fortune were being mishandled by himself or by the church.

"There should be no concern on your part about my health, which is good, my existence or anything of the sort because I simply have my work to do and I would risk breaking contracts if I did not complete it," he wrote.

SILENCE BROKEN — L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Church of Scientology, broke a 15-year silence to assure his followers he is alive and to restate his opposition to nuclear proliferation, the Rocky Mountain News reported. In today's editions, the Denver newspaper published a copyright article giving Hubbard's written answers to questions submitted by reporter Sue Lindsay through his attorneys. Hubbard also dismissed claims his financial affairs and personal fortune were being mishandled by himself or by the church.

THE FLINT JOURNAL 1983 FEB 20