

## Most targets not aware of infiltration attempts

By MARC BROWN  
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CLEARWATER—Documents released Thursday by a federal judge in Washington indicate an effort to "take over" the city of Clearwater by the Church of Scientology, but most of the persons and organizations listed in those files said Friday they are not aware of any effort by church members to infiltrate or discredit their offices.

The documents were part of a mountain of paper seized by the FBI in raids on Scientology offices in Washington and Los Angeles in July, 1977.

Listed among the targets of infiltration and investigation were the FBI, local medical societies, the state attorney's office, state legislators' offices, the police, and other "opinion leaders and media."

But most of the targets said Friday they were unaware of any infiltration attempts on the part of the Scientologists, but some added that doesn't mean the attempts haven't taken place.

Phillip McNiff, special agent in charge of the Tampa FBI office, said "there are indications they have tried to infiltrate the FBI. It was only an attempt, and it wasn't done locally."

Answering a question about City Commissioner Richard Tenney's statement that the U.S. Attorney's office plans to launch a local investigation into the church's local activities, McNiff said: "I can't comment on any investigation."

He also declined to say if the FBI is working with the U.S. Attorney on any local, Scientology-related matters.

"I can't comment on that right now," he said.

Richard Cope, president of the Clearwater-Largo-Dunedin Board of Realtors, said that to his knowledge no infiltration has taken place in the local board offices.

"God knows we've taken a lot of heat for selling them property," he said. "But I don't see how infiltrating the board could do any good. We're a professional organization."

Asked about non-member employees and clerical help, he said: "We have a tremendous turnover. How could we tell? But from what I

read, that's their forte—to get right in there and take jobs so they know what's going on."

Frank Daniels, chief of police, also said he had no knowledge of infiltration in his department.

He said he has heard no word about the possibility of an investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Florida House of Representatives Minority Leader Curt Kiser said Friday he was not aware of any infiltration of legislative offices.

"That's not to say it isn't possible though," Kiser added.

He said that several years ago when the House was dealing with a bill that would have restricted local law enforcement cooperation with Interpol, the international police organization, a man lobbied him against the bill.

"After several visits, I pinned him down and found out he worked for an organization affiliated with Scientology. I told him right then I could no longer talk with him," he said.

"They have never bothered or followed me, or sent people around to see what I'm doing, but I was friends with Mark Sableman at the time, and he pointed out the things that had been done to him," Kiser said.

Sableman, a former Clearwater Sun reporter who had written a series of articles critical of Scientology, was the target of an alleged smear campaign by the group.

"He is not a paranoid person, and I believed he was telling me the truth," Kiser said.

Clearwater Sun Editor Ron Stuart is an exception to the general no-knowledge rule.

"It (investigation, harassment, and infiltration by the Scientologists) was very real for us," he said.

Stuart said that for at least a year a woman feeding information to the Scientologists was employed by the Sun—part of that time as the city desk clerk.

Several projects on Scientology the Sun was preparing for publication came quickly to the attention of the church, leading the Sun's management to the source of the leak.

Stuart cited mailings, suspicious phone calls, and being followed in traffic as forms of harassment. He

also cited the alleged smear campaign against Sableman.

"We were wrestling with what we felt was a major story for Clearwater, because of the amount of property involved, and because a secret organization was involved. We had a fear of interfering with a religious organization that had every indication it was not religious in their actions. We were faced with reporting a community hysteria, and trying not to contribute to that hysteria," Stuart said.

To his knowledge, he said, there are no efforts at this time to infiltrate the Sun.

"But now is a different situation," he said. "We have not been actively looking into them for several years."

Meanwhile, with one unconfirmed exception, the Scientologists have never infiltrated the Greater Clearwater Chamber of Commerce, according to Executive Director Jim Parker.

"There was one time, either at the end of 1975 or beginning of 1976, a woman came to us and said she wanted to do volunteer work," Parker said.

"After about four months, she got a paying job and left," he said. "About a year later, I got a call from the FBI saying they were doing an investigation of her. They didn't say why, but I got the distinct impression that she was a Scientologist."

Nancy Reitze, a spokesman for the local Scientology chapter, said the only way the group could be accused of "taking over" Clearwater is through its social reform and honesty in government group.

The documents used as a source of accusation against the Scientologists pertain to the defendants in a federal court suit, and not to the church in general.

Scientology, she said, is apolitical, and doesn't support one candidate over another. But members do need to be involved in government to keep in honest, she said.

Scientologists have conducted surveys and found that most people believe there is dishonesty in government, she said.

We just want to make sure that government is of the people, by the people and for the people," she said.