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## Trial Lawyers Call Scientology Archivist 'Walking Time Bomb'

By MYRNA OLIVER, Times Staff Writer

A former Church of Scientology archivist was a "walking time bomb" at the time he took personal letters and papers of church founder L. Ron Hubbard and his wife, Mary Sue Hubbard, two opposing

attorneys agreed Friday at the end of a five-week trial over possession of the documents.

The brief and rare point of agreement occurred during closing arguments by Barry S. Litt, attorney for Mrs. Hubbard, and Michael Flynn, attorney for the defendant, archivist Gerald Armstrong, before Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Paul G. Breckenridge Jr.

Breckenridge said he needed to engage in a "sort-out mission" of the case's several hundred exhibits and his thoughts before ruling in the non-jury civil case.

The church and Mrs. Hubbard are seeking the return of several boxes of documents Armstrong took when he left the organization in 1981, as well as monetary damages. They claim he stole the documents and illegally converted them to his own use by giving them to Flynn, noted for handling litigation against the church, for use in attacking the organization in courts across the country.

Armstrong, a member of the church for 13 years, claims he took the documents to defend himself against the organization's "fair-game" policy, which encourages members to physically assault, harass and sue church enemies. He believes the documents prove his claims that Hubbard lied about his entire background, including records as an accomplished scientist and a World War II hero.

In his final remarks Friday, Flynn explained his client's "walking time bomb" behavior as fear on Armstrong's part that he would be harassed and sued for exposing the truth about Hubbard's background.

Claims by the church that its well-known "fair-game" policy had been canceled years ago, Flynn argued, are a myth. He said Armstrong was right to fear

reprisals and to take documents that could prove Hubbard was a fraud who had actually been stripped of command of a small gunboat in World War II for firing on islands off Mexico and engaging in purported combat with non-existent submarines off Oregon.

Flynn cited myriad specific exhibits culled from the boxes of documents (impounded by the court since 1982) to illustrate that Hubbard had aggrandized his background to induce admirers to pay for his courses in Dianetics (his own brand of psychology) and work for him for a few dollars a week.

Litt cited far different reasons for terming Armstrong a "walking time bomb," noting the young man had come to hate the religion and its leader (Hubbard) he once revered.

"Essentially this case is the story of a person who became an apostate," Litt said, "whose love for his religion turns into hate, whose former defense of that religion turns into an attack."

Litt said Armstrong became increasingly "vindictive and embittered" and struck out at the church by spiriting personal letters of the Hubbards to Flynn for use in other litigation.

"It was both an act of attack and hostility," Litt argued, "to show Mr. Flynn the dirt he had."

Robert N. Harris, attorney for the church, adamantly denied that the organization maintains any "fair-game" policy victimizing former members or enemies, and agreed with Litt that it was Armstrong, not the church, who engaged in "fair-game" harassment.

"He stole the property of the church to give it to the church's main attacker, Mr. Flynn," Harris charged.

"If there really were a 'fair game,' Your Honor," he emphasized, "Mr. Flynn would not be here."