

# Scientologists in dirty campaign to stop book

THE CHURCH of Scientology has mounted a campaign of intimidation and harassment against the author and publisher of a new book on the founder of the religious cult to be serialised shortly by The Sunday Times.

Scientologists and private detectives have been used to put pressure on people in Britain and the United States involved in the forthcoming publication of *Bare Faced Messiah: the True Story of L Ron Hubbard*.

Russell Miller, the author, who spent more than two years researching the book, has been subjected to harassment and a mysterious and anonymous hate campaign by someone who has tried to "frame" him for causing the murder of a private detective in south London and other crimes, including a suspicious fire at an aircraft factory in Wiltshire.

Miller was followed for days on end during his research in America. In recent weeks supporters of the cult and private detectives have visited his friends and business associates in Europe and America in an attempt to discover details of his personal life and to discredit him.

The Sunday Times, which plans to begin serialisation of the book on November 1, has also been pestered by scientologists trying to prevent pub-

by Richard Palmer

lication. Senior executives have received threatening telephone calls. Last week one member of the cult told a Sunday Times executive: "If you publish false information, the church will defend itself. There will be trouble."

The scientologists have employed two men in London to harass the newspaper and the publisher of the book, Michael Joseph, a subsidiary of Penguin books. Last Wednesday the men, claiming to be members of a consumers' group, gained access to the offices of The Sunday Times in Wapping, east London.

Eugene Ingram, a Los Angeles private investigator employed by the church since 1982, and a Briton who did not give his name, used a false business card to obtain an interview with Brian MacArthur, the paper's executive editor. Only later did they reveal they were acting for the Church of Scientology and tried to discredit one of the sources for Miller's book, Gerry Armstrong.

The pair, using a videotaped interview with Armstrong, had tried the same tactic of discrediting him earlier in the day with executives at Penguin books. A similar videotaped interview with Armstrong was described by



Hubbard: reputation is at risk the judge at a trial in Portland, Oregon, in May 1985 as "devastating for the church" because of its cynical use of skilful editing and its "amateurish" attempt at entrapment.

Miller, a former Sunday Times journalist, is by no means the first author to feel the wrath of the Church of Scientology, which has been accused of breaking up families and brainwashing its devotees. Almost every writer who has attempted to publish a critical book on the church since 1970 has had to fight his way through the courts and endure a campaign of intimidation.

In almost every case the cult has managed to obtain copies of the manuscript before publication, on many occasions using burglary.

Courts in the US have heard

incredible tales of the lengths scientologists have been prepared to go to prevent publication of embarrassing books. Documents seized by the FBI have implicated them in covert and criminal operations, including some arranged from the cult's British headquarters in East Grinstead, West Sussex.

In 1985 Paulette Cooper, a New York journalist who wrote one of the earliest books on the cult, was paid \$400,000 in an out-of-court settlement after it was found that the church had tried to frame her for a bomb threat. Cooper went through years of hell as she was forced to appear before grand juries. Her career was almost wrecked by McCarthyite attempts to discredit her and have her imprisoned or incarcerated in a mental institution.

Miller's book, due to be published on Monday week, is the subject of a forthcoming appeal court hearing. The church, which was branded "corrupt, immoral, sinister and dangerous" by a High Court judge in 1984, has claimed photographs used are in breach of copyright.

The appeal was granted after Mr Justice Vinelott on October 10 rejected the church's attempt to delay publication as "mischievous and misconceived."