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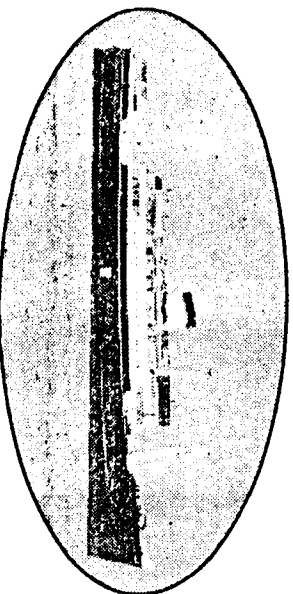
THE SUNDAY TIMES 15 NOVEMBER 1987

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# FARCE AND FEAR



IN SCIENTOLOGY'S  
PRIVATE NAVY



Top brass: Hubbard (centre) and daughter, Diana, just 17, she was a senior officer on the flagship.

# FARCE AND FEAR

## IN SCIENTOLOGY'S PRIVATE NAVY

**In the late 1960s, L Ron Hubbard was being hounded by the press, intelligence services and governments. To protect himself and his Church of Scientology, he left Britain to run the organisation from the freedom of the high seas. His ships roamed the Mediterranean in a bizarre search for buried treasure; on board, discipline was ruthless. In this final extract from the book *Scientists have tried to ban*, RUSSELL MILLER trails Commodore Hubbard on his fantastic voyage**

L RON Hubbard began making secret plans to set up the "Sea Organisation" in 1966 as hostility towards the Church of Scientology grew throughout the world. The whole operation — which became known in Scientologists' jargon as "Sea Org" — was shrouded in duplicity. His intention was that the public should believe he was returning to his former "profession" as an explorer, and, accordingly, in September 1966, Hubbard announced his resignation as president of the Church of Scientology.

This charade was supported by the explanation that the church was sufficiently well established to survive without his leadership. A special committee was even set up to investigate how much the church owed its founder; it was decided the figure was about \$13m, but Hubbard, in his benevolence, forgave the debt.

He set up the Hubbard Explorational Company with the aim of exploring "oceans,

seas, lakes, rivers and waters, lands and buildings in any part of the world and to seek for, survey, examine and test properties of all kinds".

But he had no more intention of conducting geological surveys than he had of relinquishing control of the Church of Scientology and its handsome income. His real objective was to shake off the fetters imposed by tiresome land-based bureaucracies on his activities and ambitions; his vision was of a domain of his own creation on the freedom of the high seas, connected by sophisticated coded communications to its operations on land. Its purpose would be to propagate Scientology behind a screen of business management courses.

Before the end of 1966 the Sea Org had secretly purchased its first ship, the *Enchanter*, a 40-ton schooner. The *Enchanter* went on extended cruises round the Canary Islands to search for gold Hubbard said he had buried in previous lives. "He would draw little maps for us," said Virginia Downsbrough, one of the crew, "and we would be sent off to dig for buried treasure. He told us he was hoping to replace the *Enchanter's* ballast with solid gold."

In April 1967, a second ship, the *Avon River*, an old North Sea trawler, joined the *Enchanter* at Las Palmas. Apart from the chief engineer, the only professional seaman aboard was the captain, John Jones. "My crew were 16 men and four women Scientologists who wouldn't know a trawler from a tramcar," Jones said.

Jones was informed that he would be expected to run the ship according to the rules of *The Org Book*, a sailing manual written by the founder of the Church of Scientology and therefore considered by Scientologists to be infallible gospel. "I was instructed not to use any electrical equipment, apart from lights, radio and direction finder. We had radar and other advanced equipment which I was not allowed to use. I was told it was all in *The Org Book*, which was to be obeyed without question."

Following the advice of this esteemed manual, the *Avon River* bumped the dock in Hull as she was getting under way and had barely left the Humber estuary before the Scientologist navigator, using the system advocated by Hubbard, confessed that he was lost. "I stuck to my watch and sextant," said Captain Jones, "so that at least I knew where we were."

Meanwhile, two senior Scientologists were scouring European ports for a big ship, something like a cruise liner, which could be used as the Sea Org's flagship. In September 1967 they reported that they had found just the ship Ron was looking for, the *Royal Scotsman*, built in 1936 and most recently used as an Irish cattle ferry. It could be bought for about £60,000, an insignifi-

cant amount to Hubbard since his headquarters at East Grinstead, Sussex, was taking in some £40,000 a week in fees from aspiring Scientologists.

Hubbard had the ship (pictured above left) re-registered in Sierra Leone to avoid British Board of Trade regulations, but when he received the new registration papers he noticed that an "s" had been missed out and the name of the ship was given as *Royal Scotman*. "Now the ship has a new name as well," he cried, grinning, and ordered painters to black out the second "s" in the name on the bows, stern, lifeboat and lifebelts.

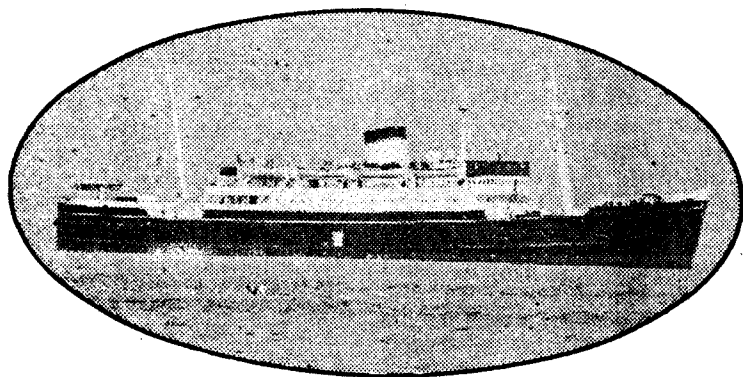
The ship was loaded with filing cabinets from East Grinstead and at the Southampton dockside, taxis disgorged eager volunteers clutching their bags and the "billion-year" contract which Hubbard had recently introduced as a condition of service in the Sea Org. His third wife, Mary Sue, and her children took over the upper-deck accommodation, which had been reserved for the Hubbard family. Ron now had his private navy.

ONE of three professional seamen aboard the *Royal Scotsman* was Stanley Churcher. On the ship's first voyage, he was "placed in a condition of doubt" for "defying an order, encouraging desertion, tolerating mutinous meetings and attempting to suborn the chief engineer". Churcher employed a few choice words to tell the Scientologist ship's officers what he thought of their "mumbo-jumbo" and was promptly sacked.

"There were seven officers of the Scientology lot," he recalled, "who used to swank about in blue and gold-braid uniforms, but I reckon they knew next to nothing about seamanship. Hubbard called himself the Commodore and had four different types of peaked cap. Hubbard's wife, who had an officer's uniform made for her, seemed to enjoy playing sailors."

"Every day they went below for lectures, but we seamen were never admitted. I offered to give them seamanship lectures and they were so pleased they gave me a free beginner's course in Scientology. I was

**INSIDE**



# FARCE AND FEAR

*continued from previous page*

told we were lower than cockroaches," said Maren. The working day began at 6am and ended at 11pm after a 90-minute lecture delivered by Hubbard. "We were terrified," Maren said. "It was continuous stress and duress."

The course had not been going long before Hubbard decided that too many mistakes were being made and he announced that in future those responsible for errors would be thrown overboard.

Next morning, at the regular muster, two names were called out. As the students stepped forward, Sea Org officers grabbed them and threw them over the side. The two "overboards" swam around the ship, climbed stone steps on to the quayside and squelched back up the gangplank, gasping for breath. At the top, they had to salute and ask for permission to return on board.

"Overboarding" was thereafter a daily ritual. "I thought it was terrible, inhumane and barbaric," said Hana Eltringham, a member of the Sea Org. "Some of the people on the course were middle-aged women. Julia Salmon, the continental head of the LA org, was 55 years old and in poor health when she was thrown overboard. She hit the water sobbing and screaming. LRH [as Hubbard had become known] enjoyed it, without a doubt. Sometimes I heard him making jokes about it. Those were the moments when I came closest to asking myself what I was doing there. But I always justified it by telling myself that he must know what he was doing and that it was all for the greater good."

IN CORFU, Hubbard renamed all his ships in honour of his Greek hosts — the Royal Scotman, for example, became the Apollo. But in March 1969, after criticism of Scientology in the Greek press and official communications with the gov-

ernments of Britain and Australia, the Scientologists were ordered to leave Corfu. According to Kathy Cariotaki, a Sea Org member who was on the bridge with Hubbard when the news came, "The old man almost had a heart attack. He went absolutely grey with shock."

For the next three years, the ship patrolled the eastern Atlantic, aimlessly sailing from port to port at the Commodore's caprice and rarely stopping anywhere for longer than six weeks. The main objective was to stay on the move.

"LRH said we had to keep moving because there were so many people after him," explained Ken Urquhart, the Commodore's personal communicator. "If they caught up with him they would cause him so much trouble that he would be unable to continue his work. Scientology would not get into the world and there would be social and economic chaos, if not a nuclear holocaust."

As official hostility towards Scientology grew, the need for security was made very real to Scientologists who flew to join the ship at its various ports of call. They were briefed and repeatedly drilled on their "shore stories" — that they were employees of Operation and Transport Corporation, a business management company. They were warned not to use any Scientology-speak on shore, to deny any link with Scientology and, in particular, to feign ignorance of L Ron Hubbard.

Hubbard reiterated that Scientology was beset by dark forces seeking to destroy anything that helped mankind. This fostered a siege mentality and provided spurious justification for the harsh conditions on the Apollo.

Aboard ship, no attempt was made to maintain the myth that Hubbard was no longer in charge of Scientology. Between 40ft and 50ft of telex messages arrived every day from Scien-

given a test on their E-meter, a sort of lie-detector, and a woman officer asked me a lot of personal questions, including details of my sex life.

"The oldest student was a woman of 75 who told me she was convinced that Mr Hubbard would fix her up with a new body when she died. I couldn't make head nor tail of it."

HUBBARD was deeply disappointed that his Canary Islands cruises had not resulted in replacing the Enchanter's ballast with gold bars. But now he had more time, more ships and more personnel at his disposal, and in February 1968 he asked for volunteers to accompany him on a special mission.

The Avon River headed for the southeast coast of Sardinia, where Hubbard mustered the crew and told them he was on the verge of achieving an ambition he had cherished for centuries.

The vast wealth he had accumulated in previous lives, he explained, was buried in strategic places. He recollected, as commander of a fleet of war galleys 2,000 years before, that there was a temple on the coast somewhere near where they lay at anchor. His intention was to put several parties ashore to search for the ruins and the secret entrance to his cache of gold plates and goblets.

The ruins of the temple at first proved difficult to locate until Hubbard realised that his recollection was based on ancient sailing instructions, whereas he had selected the search area using a modern chart. Now the ruins were soon discovered, along with the fact that the site was clearly marked as an ancient monument — it might have been more sensible to locate the temple by looking at a guidebook. No treasure was found.

The ship moved on to Tunis, where Commodore Hubbard said a Carthaginian priest had hidden a treasure trove of jewels and gold in a temple which he thought he could find. He made a clay model of what he could recall of the topography and told his search parties to scour the coastline for a "matching" landscape. Sure enough they found the site of the temple just as he had described it, but erosion had destroyed the secret tunnel where the treasure was hidden.

Then the Avon River went to Sicily, where searchers failed to find treasure in an ancient watchtower, and on to the coast of Calabria, which had been Hubbard's territory when he was a tax collector at the time of the Roman Empire and had hidden gold in sacred stone shrines along the coast. None of the shrines could be found. Hubbard concluded that the coast had been eroded and the shrines washed into the sea, along with the hidden gold.

The climax of the mission was still to come — a visit to a secret space station in moun-

tainous terrain on the island of Corsica. According to Hubbard, it occupied a huge cavern which could only be entered by pressing a specific palm print (the crew had no doubt it was Hubbard's) against a certain rock.

Sadly, the Corsican space station was to remain no more than a thrilling rumour, for an urgent radio message arrived from the Royal Scotman in Valencia asking the Commodore to return immediately. The Spanish authorities were threatening to tow the ship out to sea and deny her re-entry. Highly displeased, Hubbard moved his fleet.

WITH his three ships now in Corfu, Hubbard offered a course for advanced Scientologists to train as "operating thetans" at Level VIII, the highest that could be attained at that time. To become a Class VIII auditor was the ambition of every self-respecting Scientologist, although none of them was prepared for the autocracy that had developed in Sea Org.

At the end of August 1968, the first students arrived in Corfu from Britain, where Hubbard had recently been declared an undesirable alien. Many of them carried large sums of smuggled cash: the British government had recently introduced restrictions on the export of currency and it was causing cash-flow problems for the Sea Org, which routinely paid its bills in cash. "They gave me about £3,000 in high-denomination notes to take out to the ship," said one student, Mary Maren. "I hid it in my boots."

The new arrivals were given a sparse uniform of green overalls, brown belt and brown sandals and were humiliated at every opportunity. "We were

*continued over the page*

tology offices around the world and he received weekly reports detailing statistics and income from every org.

Money was, without question, one of the Commodore's primary interests, although he liked to profess a lofty disregard for such matters. Loyal members of the Sea Org, who were paid \$10 a week, believed the Commodore drew less than they did, because that is what he told them. The reality was that Hubbard was receiving \$15,000 a week from church funds through the Hubbard Explorational Company and that huge sums were being salted away in secret bank accounts in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. When one of

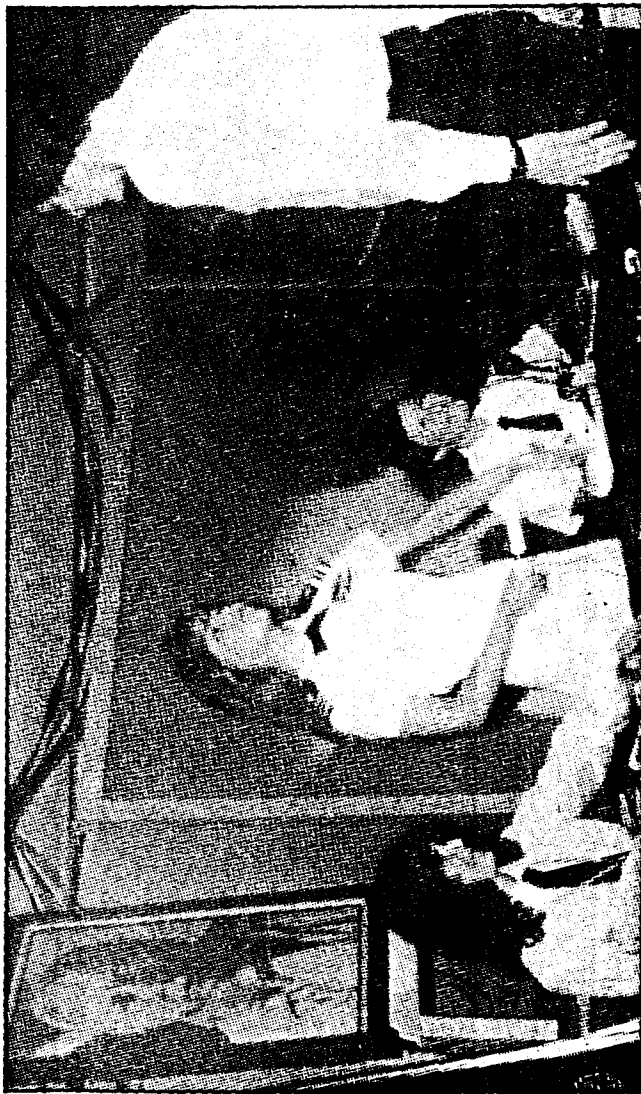
these accounts had to be closed in 1970, \$1m in cash was transferred on board the Apollo.

"The ship was a different world," said one Scientologist, Mike Goldstein. "It was supposed to run Scientology for the whole planet, but it was a world unto itself." It was also a world entirely of Hubbard's creation, and he added to it a bizarre new element — an elite unit made up of children and eventually known as the Commodore's Messenger Organisation. The CMO was staffed by the offspring of committed Scientologists and its apparently innocuous function was simply to serve the Commodore by relaying his

verbal orders to crew and students aboard the Apollo.

But the messengers, mainly pubescent girls, enjoyed their power as teenage clones of the Commodore. In their cute little dark blue uniforms and gold lanyards, they were trained to deliver Hubbard's orders using his exact words and tone of voice; if he was in a temper and bellowing abuse, the messenger would scuttle off and pipe the same abuse at the offender. Nobody dared take issue with whatever a messenger said; nobody dared disobey her orders. Vested with the authority of the Commodore they came to be widely-feared little monsters.

From 1970 onwards, mes-



Sea Org lives on: Hubbard's portrait looms over a Scientology award ceremony five years after his death

sengers attended Hubbard day and night, working on six-hour watches. When he was asleep, two messengers sat outside his state-room waiting for the buzzer that would signal he was awake. Throughout his waking hours, they sat outside his office waiting for his call. When he took a stroll on deck they followed him, one carrying his cigarettes, the other an ashtray to catch the ash as it fell.

L RON Hubbard's eccentric idyll could not last. As stories about the strange practices of Scientology spread and intelligence agencies and governments began to investigate the activities of the church, the Apollo became a less and less welcome visitor to ports. Finally, Hubbard, after suffering a mild stroke, decided to return to the United States, where he was to spend the rest of his life in hiding while his messengers took control of the Church of Scientology. At the end of February 1980, he disappeared, never to be seen again.

On January 19, 1986, Scientologists around the world received their last message from L Ron Hubbard. In Flag Order number 3879, headed "The Sea Org and The Future", he announced that he was promoting himself to the rank of admiral.

Six days later, Irene Reis, the co-owner of a chapel in San Luis Obispo, California, received a telephone call asking if they did cremations. The body that arrived at the chapel was that of L Ron Hubbard, along with a death certificate giving

the cause of death as cerebral haemorrhage and a certificate of religious belief forbidding an autopsy. The body was cremated at 3.30 that afternoon.

On January 27, Scientologists were told that "at 2000 hours, Friday, January 24, 1986, L Ron Hubbard discarded the body he had used in his lifetime for 74 years, 10 months and 11 days. The body he had used to facilitate his existence in this universe had ceased to be useful and in fact had become an impediment to the work he now must do outside its confines."

There are those who believe Hubbard died years earlier and that his death was covered up by the messengers while they consolidated their control over the church. There are those who believe Hubbard will soon be entering another body, or might even have done so already, prior to resuming his position as the head of Scientology.

There are those who believe that, for all his faults, Hubbard made a significant contribution to helping his fellow men.

And there are those who now believe, sadly, that they were the unwitting victims of one of the most successful and colourful confidence tricksters of the 20th century.

©Russell Miller 1987

*Extracted from Bare-Faced Messiah, by Russell Miller, published by Michael Joseph price £12.95*

*A review of the book appears on page 60*

# 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."

# WALL STREET JOURNAL.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1987

## *IRS Has Broad Discretion to Refuse To Release Tax Data, High Court Rules*

By STEPHEN WERMIEL

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled that the Internal Revenue Service has broad discretion to refuse to release tax records requested by taxpayers, even when deleting names or other identifying features would preserve confidentiality.

In a 6-0 ruling, the court rejected arguments by the Church of Scientology, which sought access to tax records pertaining to the organization and its founder.

Federal law requires that the IRS keep confidential all tax returns and "return information," including itemized details from returns or data about audits or penalties. The case involves interpretation of a 1976 amendment to the laws, which said the definition of "return information" excludes "data in a form which cannot be associated with, or otherwise identify, directly or indirectly, a particular taxpayer."

The Church of Scientology argued, and some appeals courts have agreed in other cases, that the amendment means the IRS must simply delete names and other identification from documents and then release them.

But, the IRS argued that even documents from which names have been deleted are confidential. The IRS does release summary information, although it believes it isn't required to.

In an opinion written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the first full opinion of the court term, the high court sided with the IRS, affirming a decision by the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C.

The high court ruled that the intent of the 1976 amendment wasn't to force the IRS to go to the trouble of deleting identification from thousands of records so that those documents could be released. The court said nothing in the record of the congressional debate suggests that Congress wanted individual taxpayer information released, even after deletions.

The effect of the ruling is to give the IRS a strong defense to requests by tax-

payers for information under the Freedom of Information Act. Some consumer and civil liberties groups warned before the ruling that the IRS's approach gives it "a virtually impenetrable wall around all information that can be gleaned from tax returns."

Summary IRS information is used by scholars or tax-enforcement monitoring groups to study patterns of IRS activity or to analyze enforcement policies.

Justice Antonin Scalia didn't participate in the decision because he wrote the appeals court ruling. Justice William Brennan also didn't participate, and no explanation was given.

# Los Angeles Times

Wednesday, November 11, 1987

★ Wednesday, November 11, 1987 / Part I 3

## Scientists Lose Bid for IRS Records

By DAVID G. SAVAGE, *Times Staff Writer*

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court, rejecting an appeal filed by the Church of Scientology of California to obtain government tax records, ruled Tuesday that the public has no right to get information kept by the Internal Revenue Service.

The tax agency "has no duty under the Freedom of Information Act" to disclose internal records, even if names and other confidential information could be easily deleted, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist said.

Civil rights attorneys denounced the unanimous decision, saying the ruling will make it virtually impossible for outsiders to monitor IRS activities because it gives the agency a free hand to turn down requests for information. The ruling also marks another court reversal for the church, which has carried on a protracted legal struggle with a host of government agen-

cies.

"This ruling essentially immunizes the IRS from public scrutiny," said David Viadeck, a lawyer with the Public Citizen Litigation Group, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case. "Ironically, this is the one agency that every American deals with annually. What the court has done today is erect an insurmountable obstacle to obtaining IRS records."

At issue here was a conflict between two laws: the Internal Revenue Code, which says tax "returns and return information shall be confidential," and the Freedom of Information Act, which gives citizens the right to seek government records that are not secret or confidential.

Believing that they had been harassed by the IRS, church officials in 1980 requested "copies of all records, correspondence or any form of information relating

to . . . the Church of Scientology" and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard.

The IRS did not respond, and the church filed suit, citing a 1976 congressional amendment that said the public may have access to "data in a form which cannot be associated with, or otherwise identify . . . a particular taxpayer." Two lower courts sided with the IRS, concluding that it should not be required to go to great lengths to supply such information.

The key question for the high court was whether the IRS should be required to disclose the records after deleting names of taxpayers or if it could refuse to disclose any of the records because names appear on them.

In his opinion for the court, Rehnquist said the 1976 amendment did not appear to have an "expansive purpose" of giving the public more right to seek internal informa-

tion.

"We thus hold that, as with a [tax] return itself, removal of identification from return information would not deprive it of protection" from disclosure, Rehnquist said for the 6-0 majority in *Church of Scientology of California vs. IRS*, 86-472. Two justices—William J. Brennan Jr. and Antonin Scalia, who handled the case in a lower court—took no part in the case.

Eric Lieberman, a New York attorney who represented the church, said the ruling gives "no recourse" to citizens who believe they have been harassed by the IRS.

"Church officials believe they were put on the 'enemies list' by the Nixon Administration and they were harassed for political reasons. This decision says the IRS doesn't have to disclose anything about that episode," Lieberman said.

## BOOKS

&amp; AUTHORS

## BEST SELLERS

## FICTION

1. **Kaleidoscope** Danielle Steel
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5. **Heaven and Hell** John Jakes
6. **Patriot Games** Tom Clancy
7. **Beloved** Toni Morrison
8. **Hot Flashes** Barbara Rasch
9. **Sarum** Edward Rutherfurd
10. **A Southern Family** Gail Godwin

## NON-FICTION

1. **The Great Depression of 1990** Ravi Batra
2. **Vell** Bob Woodward
3. **Time Flies** Bill Cosby

## Hubbard

Continued from Page 26

creed that admits no discussion, no questions, no revisions, that forces its members to sacrifice not only their possessions and freedom, but their innermost thoughts.

The current leaders of the Church of Scientology (Hubbard died in January 1986) are described by Corydon as humorless zealots obsessed with burnishing Hubbard's name and restoring the credibility of Scientology. It is certain that they have tried very hard to suppress Corydon's book, having sued repeatedly in various courts and also tried to keep the book from even being reviewed. Their heavy-handed threat of a lawsuit against one Florida paper by a Beverly Hills lawyer was answered by reporting the event as a straight news story. They have provided this writer with a virtual page-by-page refutation of Corydon's book. Unfortunately, their approach to the subject is no more balanced than Corydon's, filled with evasions, distortions and circular reasoning.

Their rather strenuous efforts to suppress the Corydon book can only add luster and credibility to what could otherwise be considered (at least in part) a monumental case of sour grapes.

Francis Hamit is a Los Angeles writer and reviewer.

## 'Hubbard': a story of bitter betrayal

Title: "L. Ron Hubbard, Messiah or Madman?"  
Author: Bent Corydon and L. Ron Hubbard Jr. (a.k.a. Ronald DeWolfe)  
Data: Lyle Stuart, \$20

By FRANCIS HAMIT

Anytime a book title contains such a perjorative word as "madman," you have a pretty fair indication that the author has loaded his rhetorical dice and sharpened his literary executioner's ax. Such is the case here. Bent Corydon is the only actual author of this work. (L. Ron Hubbard Jr. reached a settlement with the Church of Scientology after signing the book contract with the publisher and sued unsuccessfully to have his name removed as co-author.)

Corydon spent more than 20 years as a Church of Scientology official and certainly can speak with an insiders' viewpoint as to Scientology and its tenets, but his discourse is a bitter one: that of a true believer betrayed. This is most evident in the early chapters where he makes many assertions not immediately backed up by hard evidence.

## Compelling narrative

However, when he drops the yellow-journalism approach and recounts his own experience and that of others who have been privy to Scientology's inner workings, the narrative becomes compelling. He has done his homework, even seeking out Hubbard's second wife, Sarah Northrup.

In the 1930s and '40s, L. Ron Hubbard was one of the most prolific writers of science fiction and other popular fiction in the nation. His charismatic personality was legendary. He created such classics as "Fear" and "Typewriter in the Sky." Currently a recently discovered first novel, "Buckskin Brigades," an account of the settlement of the Northwest Territories where the Indians are the good guys, is selling well and is further evidence of his considerable gift for writing compelling narrative.

In the early 1950s, Hubbard published his book "Dianetics, the Science of Mental Health," which became a best seller. (It currently is again, due to heavy promotion by the publisher, Bridge Publications. Bridge is generally viewed as the publishing arm of the Church of Scientology and publishes little other than Hubbard's works and projects.)

Hubbard used this success to start first a chain of Dianetics clinics and then, according to Corydon, cynically re-created Dianetics



L. Ron Hubbard's Dianetics and Church of Scientology are examined in "L. Ron Hubbard, Messiah or Madman?"

as a religious institution, Scientology, to take advantage of the protection afforded by the First Amendment and to avoid both taxation and accountability for the large amounts of money that had begun to flow to Hubbard's organizations.

## Development of Scientology

Corydon goes on to trace the history and development of Scientology as a means of gathering money, intelligence data and power for Hubbard, who, Corydon claims, had nothing less than the creation of a world government led by Scientologists as his ultimate goal. He recounts various episodes, including Hubbard's creation of the "Sea Org." (Sea Organization), a church elite based upon a small fleet of ships and the movement of Hubbard and other officials from country to country in an attempt to meet these goals and to evade questioning by local authorities.

Much of this information is based upon the now-recanted input of L. Ron Hubbard Jr. Recantations are as suspect in journalism as they are in law (especially when backed by obvious financial considerations). Some of the material puts Hubbard in a very bad light (even accusing him of involvement with black magic), as does the available public record on the activities of various Church of Scientology organizations.

Corydon expresses his opinion that Hubbard deliberately designed Scientology as a trap. The bait was the Dianetics therapy, which, indeed, has been helpful to many people. The trap, he says, was to be drawn into becoming a dedicated church member, under total control and willing to commit illegal acts to perpetuate the organization and its founder's wealth and power. There is no adequate way in the space available to discuss the higher level teachings without mak-

ing them sound like the bad science fiction they are said to be. The problem comes, of course, if it is as Corydon claims and these teachings have been interpreted as literal truth.

## Logical description

Certainly that literal truth mindset makes Corydon's description of a church organized along military lines with severe discipline a logical one. The spectre of a church with its own secret police, the Guardian's Office (estimated by Corydon to have more than 600 members at one point), is a chilling one. The Guardian's Office was able and willing not only to grossly violate the freedom and rights of its own members but also to mount attacks against former members and others who questioned church policies in any way.

It was responsible for implementing the notorious "Fair Game" policy. (One victim of this policy recently won a judgment in excess of \$30 million against the Church of Scientology in California.) The Guardian's Office apparently attempted to infiltrate various government organizations and to both steal government files or to plant altered data there.

The day of reckoning came on July 8, 1977, when the FBI raided Scientology offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., and revealed the "Snow White" program. The final result was to send Mary Sue Hubbard (L. Ron Hubbard's third wife) and other top church officials to prison.

Also revealed was the attempt of certain people with the Guardian's Office to frame New York journalist Paulette Cooper (who had written an earlier book critical of Scientology) for sending bomb threats through the mail.

## A man obsessed

Corydon describes Hubbard as a man obsessed with money and power, a megalomaniac who periodically destroyed those closest to him, who made himself commodore of his own private navy and who attempted to subvert the foreign governments as a prelude to taking over a small country.

Even if Corydon's attacks on Hubbard's character, apparent exaggerations of accomplishments, and motivations and his allegedly pervasive and all-consuming control of the Church of Scientology are put aside, there remains the issues raised by the actions of Hubbard's subordinates and successors. Scientology is, by this account, a

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# Whoring after strange gods

PETER CONRAD

BARE-FACED MESSIAH:

The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard

by Russell Miller

Michael Joseph £12.95

IT IS one of history's sower ironies that the United States—founded as a haven for the victims of religious persecution, scrupulously dividing Church from State in its constitution—should so soon have taken to whoring after strange gods. The country has become a bedlam of spurious alternative religions; it's over-run by Mormons and holy rollers and smarmy showbiz preachers, by visionary crazies like Charles Manson or the Rev. Jim Jones, astutely pious tycoons like Oral Roberts, and feel-good philosophers like the gnomish Dr Ruth, who unkinks the national psyche with the aid of antie-ish sex therapy.

Among these multitudinous messiahs, L. Ron Hubbard still manages to stand out. A crass, self-promoting huckster like Sinclair Lewis's Elmer Gantry, he began his career writing trashy parables for science-fiction magazines. He saw that these tales of invading moon-men and imminent apocalypse exploited the unease of America's swampy collective unconsciousness; preying on the same fears and the same hunger for phoney certainties, he invented an instant mental technology which he called Dianetics and made it the ground of his global, immensely lucrative Church of Scientology.

His was a pathetically wish-fulfilling brand of religion, utterly American in mood: it raised the power of positive

thinking to miraculous heights. He claimed to have discovered a Dianetic genie, a 15-year-old girl, who had made her own bad teeth spontaneously eject and had grown new ones in their place. When his mother was desperately ill in hospital, he advised her to mosey on down to the maternity ward and trade in her body for a younger one, like an obsolete appliance. If an atomic bomb were to go off in Nevada, he would defuse it with a mental blast alone. Who wouldn't want to believe such hokey lullabies?

Scientology suited America because it derived a religion from technology. This witch's brew of sublime irrationality and applied science fuses two permanent traits in the American character: a similar cult captured Aldous Huxley, who hailed hallucinogens as a chemical mod. con., a technology for attaining Nirvana now. Hubbard expounded Dianetics, in a 1950 issue of *Atomizing Science Fiction*, by likening the brain to a computer, and set out to rewrite its imperfect workings; the uplift was lubricated, as in Huxley's case, by a drug—'a haphazard cocktail of benzadrine, vitamins and glutamic acid,' known onomatopoeically as GUK.

The marriage between engineering and theology was at its maddest and yet also at its most typically American in Hubbard's association with Jack Parsons, a scientist who happened also to be a satanist. During the war he had worked at Cal. Tech. on jet engines and rocket fuels; but by night he was an occultist, a sorcerer, a believer in demons and in the efficacy of spells. Nuclear physics and black magic belong together: what after all is one but a learned version of the other?

Parsons concocted mind-blowing potions in his lab, until the day he dropped a flask of nitro-glycerine and blasted himself promptly to hell. Hubbard, bothered by some inconvenient legal heat, simply disappeared in 1980, and though he turned up dead in a Californian coroner's office last year, his followers believe he has merely transferred to an 'implant station'—perhaps the Martian factory for reincarnationary

outfitting which he said existed 'somewhere in the Pyrenes' — to be measured for a new body.

After books on Hefner with his compliant cotton-tailed Bunny girls and on the plutocratic Gettys, Russell Miller has made a specialty of analysing self-made American monsters. The investigative reporter in him enjoys demonstrating how Hubbard falsified everything: his wartime exploits, his travels, even the day of his birth. Wanting a naval commission, he wrote himself a eulogistic reference addressed to FDR on House of Representatives

note-paper signed by a Senator who couldn't be bothered composing the encomium himself. Wanting academic credentials in order to set up shop in London, he purchased a Doctorate of Divinity from Sequoia University in Los Angeles, a small mail-order operation run by 'a chiropractor and naturopath'; later, deploring 'the damage being done in our society with nuclear physics and psychiatry by persons calling themselves "Doctor"', he solemnly renounced this trumpety title in an advertisement he took out in the personal column of *The Times*.

Miller is good, too, on the banality of

the man (visiting heaven in 1963, he reported that it was rather like Beverly Hills or Forest Lawn, 'complete with gates, angels and plaster saints — and electronic implant equipment'), and on his grossness. At his Georgian manor outside East Grinstead, Hubbard dined on gargantuan steaks washed down with Coca-Cola while his guests made do with frozen fillets of plaice; later, in a Hefneresque twist, he commanded troops of nubile girl-angels in tight jeans and bulging halters to be his body-servants—they plugged his mouth with Kool non-filters on demand, checked his bath with a thermometer and held his pants as he clambered into them because 'he didn't like his trouser legs to touch the floor.'

What's missing from Miller's book is the recognition of Hubbard's typicality. Miller treats him as a loony and a freak; in fact he was a morbid symptom of America itself, an invention of that culture with its credulous lust both for technical know-how and religious affluence. Its insistence on immediate gratification and automated transcendence. Miller's last word is that Hubbard was 'one of the most successful and colourful confidence-tricksters of the twentieth century' — but ever since Herman Melville's great story, the con-man has been the archetypal American hero.

November 26, 1987 ★

Los Angeles Times

## Scientologists Sued for \$6 Million in Suicide of Man

*From Times Wire Services*

A woman filed a \$6-million lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday against the Church of Scientology for allegedly driving her son to commit suicide last year.

Irene Marshall said in her suit that church officials tried to destroy the close relationship she had with her son, Pedro Rimando, 22, and that their efforts drove him to leap off the sixth floor of a church-owned building in Hollywood on Nov. 25, 1986.

The suit charges the church, the Rev. Ken Hoden and J. Porter with wrongful death, intentional infliction of emotional distress leading to suicide, and with negligence and outrageous conduct.

Officials of the Church of Scientology "held themselves out as particularly competent to provide the decedent with personal and spiritual guidance" to resolve his troubles, the suit said.

After Rimando graduated from high school in 1984, he experienced "inner conflicts, was uncertain, confused and unhappy with himself because he believed that his life lacked purpose, direction and

meaning," the suit said.

The church "imposed certain psychologically coercive techniques" on Rimando "to exploit for power, labor and money [his] pre-

existing emotional vulnerabilities and inner conflicts," the suit said.

A spokesman for the church said church officials had not seen a copy of the suit.