Scientology Faces New Charges Of Harassment

By Stephen Koff St. Petersburg Times

ST. PETERSBURG, Dec. 22, 1988 -- The year was 1976, one year after the Church of Scientology had secretly moved its spiritual headquarters to Clearwater (Fla.), and Mayor Gabe Cazares was complaining too loudly for the church's comfort.

So, as documents seized by the FBI would later show, the church's Clearwater office devised a scheme "ruin Mayor Gabriel Cazares" political career by spreading scandal about his sex life."

Church officials came up with ways to get Cazares' school records, birth records, anything - from checking with the Catholic Church to looking in graveyards for headstones with Cazares' name that might discredit the mayor.

The next year, the FBI raided church offices and seized hundreds of documents. Eleven church members were subsequently convicted of crimes. And the Church of Scientology promised that it had cleaned house. Such dirty tricks, said the church, were things of the past.

Consider, then, the more recent case of Charles O'Reilly, an aggressive California lawyer who was another thorn in the side of ·Scientology. O'Reilly represented some former Scientologists who were suing the church, and he refused to settle their cases. One client, who said the church nearly drove him insane, had won a \$30million verdict against the sect. Church executives were irate, one of their former lawyers recalled in sworn testimony.

So in the spring of 1987, topranking Scientologists and lawyers called a meeting at their headquarters on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles to talk over the O'Reilly matter. According to their former lawyer, Joseph Yanny, the Scientologists planned to steal confidential files on O'Reilly from the Betty Ford Center and other alcohol - and drug, : treatment, centers. Yanny said the centers. Yanny said the Scientologists figured that such records could be used to blackmail

Ultimately, the plan to steal the records was scaled back, then dropped altogether. But the idea was similar to other plans that were carried out, say former top Scientology officials and representatives. Although such claims have been made before by alleged victims of the church's tricks, the new charges are coming from people who were inside the highest circles of Scientology.

These officials include a church executive who recently left Scientology, a former church security chief, a California lawyer who until recently helped formulate Scientology's legal strategy, the church's former international president, and dozens of former church members, including one who has written a book critical of the church and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard.

Cumulatively, the new charges lead to a stinging conclusion about Scientology: Despite its assurances of reform, a pattern of abuses continues against church critics. In some cases, those abuses cross the line of criminal law, according to authorities.

A judge in Spain recently reached the same conclusion. After a ninemonth investigation, Judge Jose Maria Vazquez Honrubia on Nov. (1988) detained Scientologists in Madrid and ordered 11 of them jailed. Those held included Heber Jentzsch, a 53-yearold American and president of the Scientology Church of International. After three weeks, Jentzsch and the church members were released on \$1.1-million bail but now must report to the court three times a week. They could face charges of coercion, fraud, flight of capital, illicit association and labor law violations. They say they are the victims of an international

conspiracy.
Similarly, 15 Scientologists and the church itself are awaiting trial in Canada on charges stemming from a 1983 police raid in which about 2 million stolen government documents were seized from church offices. Scientology lawyers said the sect would donate money to charity if charges against the church were dismissed, but Ontario Attorney General Ian Scott declined the offer.

Scientologists and their lawyers would not answer questions for this series of articles

The church and the St. Petersburg

Times are adversaries in a federal court case, and chief Scientology counsel Earle C. Cooley of Boston attributed the church's "no comment" to that dispute. The Times seeks to unseal files in four lawsuits against Scientology settled in 1986. Although court files are normally open, the judge granted the church's request to seal these cases over the objections of opposing lawyers. The Church of Scientology now wants to keep them closed. Times lawyers argued in a motion in October that closing the files violates the First Amendment. The First Amendment to the Constitution, among other things, gives a guarantee of a free press, and Times lawyers said that closing the files interferes with the newspaper's right to gather and publish news.

The Times won a Pulitzer Prize in 1980 for exposes of abuse by the church. In 1984, California Superior Judge Paul G. Breckenridge ruled that "the organization clearly is achieved many and account " schizophrenic and paranoid.

"It hasn't changed at all," said William Franks, who until 1982 was chairman and executive director of the Church of Scientology International, Franks left the church after a showdown between church leaders and owners of numerous Scientology "missions," or franchises.

Franks has said that despite public statements, it became clear that church executives never intended to change Scientology's character. Franks is now businessman in Philadelphia; his replacement as Scientology's international president was Jentzsch, who is now out on bail in

Embarrassing the opposition

Although it has a large presence in Pinellas County (Fla), Scientology keeps its business headquarters in California, and it

was there that top Scientologists and lawyers gathered to talk about O'Reilly, the lawyer who was causing them trouble.

Joseph Yanny, 38, was one of those lawyers. He has since fallen out with the church, but at the time, he was one of Scientology's top lawyers. Yanny began representing Scientology in trademark matters in 1983. His other clients include Corona Beer and the rock group Grateful Dead. By 1985, Yanny was "closely involved in the formulation of legal according to court strategy," documents filed by Scientologists.

I and others were told by (Scientology executive) Marty Rathburn that on orders of David Miscavige, the successor of L. Ron Hubbard as the head of the cult, that the medical records of O'Reilly were to be stolen from the Betty Ford Center, and another location in Santa Barbara, to show that he was using cocaine, discredit him, and possibly blackmail him into easing off on his \$30-million verdict now on appeal." Yanny said last summer when questioned by Scientology lawyers.

anny balked. "I wanted no part of any criminal conduct to obtain the stuff," he said in an interview with the Times. "An alternative plan was quickly arrived at to seule he said when nerves." questioned by other lawyers.

The new tack: Rather than steal the records, lawyers would get them through the judicial process. Subpoenas were prepared for records from the Betty Ford Center, the Eisenhower Medical Center and Cottage Care Center, all in California. Specifically requested in the subpoenas, which are now on file in federal court, were "records of admittance for treatment of alcohol an/or drug use or dependency, records of treatment of Mr. O'Reilly for alcohol and/or drug usage, records concerning any known distribution or receipt by Mr. O'Reilly of any illegal drug.

Yanny said he protested again, saying the Scientologists were abusing the legal system. He said he refused to sign the subpoenas, and although they were filed with the court, they were ultimately never served. Yanny resigned as church counsel.

Since then, Yanny has been sued by the Church of Scientology, which says that after quitting he supplied church adversaries with privileged Scientology legal information.

An account from inside

She was 22, a former Unitarian. He was a former Marine air traffic controller with two tours in:

Vietnam. They were taking courses. at Mountainview Junior Collège in Dallas when Vicki McRae met

Richard Azneran.
"He told me that there was a guy in Austin named Whit Whitford who was a Scientologist... and that this fellow could do all sorts of magical things, like make butterflies come out of the sky and things like that," she remembered when questioned by lawyers in

"That conversation ended pretty quickly, because I told him I. thought it was bulls---.

Ms. McRae's skepticism vielded to Azneran's curiosity, though, and before long both were Scientologists, later they became husband and wife.

Scientologists - their leader called

the group a religion, but said it didn't require abandoning other religious beliefs. It-was a religion. of man: a belief that through a form of one-on-one counseling called auditing," man could free himselfof deep-rooted psychological; baggage and live a self-determined. life. This auditing was accomplished with the help of an 'E-meter," a device similar to a lie-

The founder of this religion was ; L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction writer in the 1940s whose 1950 book Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health planted the seed for the Scientology movement. In its simplest explanation, Dianetics was a science of the mind, and Scientology was the theology it embraced.

Hubbard wrote that the human mind is a camera with thousands of tiny images. These "engrams" were regularly picked up by the mind they could have been recorded by a person almost as early conception - and profoundly affected human behavior, even creating physical maladies. They had to be excised before man could rid himself and the planet of neurosis, war, crime and disease, Hubbard said. The end result was a state called "clear."

Vicki Azneran, like millions of other people around the world, was intrigued. She began taking Scientology courses at a Dallas Dianetics center and soon joined the staff. In time she advanced to the national staff, putting in 18-hour days in exchange for \$10 a week plus room and board and auditing privileges, she said. She was rewarded with prestige, and in 1983 was promoted to president of Religious Technology Center (RTC). This was the Scientology branch, based in Los Angeles, that made sure Hubbard's teachings were delivered in a standard format. The position made her one of the highest-ranking Scientologists in the world.

Vicki Azneran had become part of Scientology's elite. She knew the complex myriad of organizations and sub-organizations and how they fit together. She now says that Scientology's corporate web was. created as a way of beating taxes. She also knew other details, and recently testified about them in federal court proceedings.

Among other things, she

disclosed the systematic destruction church documents. Scientologists feared those records might show that Hubbard secreted millions of dollars of church money into his own accounts, she testified. (A federal Judge last year ruled that Hubbard did just that.) Since the church claimed to be not-for-profita contention disputed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). any such records could be

damaging.
Vicki Azneran said she and her husband helped make sure the records were never released. They shredded financial documents in 1980 in Clearwater, she said, and again in 1981. Then in 1986, she said, she and Richard "participated in the coverup of expenditures... in anticipation of an IRS audit" in California.

Meantime, in 1984, she said, she destroyed other documents - which a California judge had ordered the church to yield. The church had personal records on Gerry Armstrong, a former Scientologist in litigation with the sect. Now Judge Paul Breckenridge of California Superior Court was ordering the Church of Scientology to turn over these records, called "PC" files, or pre-clear files. The files, kept on all Scientologists, contain personal information - from secret desires to confessions of misconduct - extracted during auditing sessions.

"I removed documents from Gerry Armstrong's PC folders to keep them from being turned over to the court," Vicki Azneran said. "I went through them and removed things from them. And some of those things I destroyed, and some of them I gave away or gave to someone in OSA (Office of Special Affairs), I believe."

Richard Azneran, who also had risen through the ranks - becoming Hubbard's public relations representative and later supervising church security - said culling pre-clear files was standard church practice. He said he also carried out similar tasks.

Among the duties he described in depositions: bugging staff members' rooms, digging through adversarial lawyers' garbage and investigating so-called enemies of the church.

In 1985, Scientology executive David Miscavige told him to set up eavesdropping equipment in all the offices of Author Services Incorporated, Azneran said. Author Services is Scientology's for-profit division, licensing the copyrights to the prolific Hubbard's works. Miscavige feared a raid by the IRS and wanted to photograph and record "everything that any agent ever said to each other" so it could be used in plotting a defense, Azneran said.

Rick Azneran also devised and helped implement a system to destroy church computer tapes, he

The way it worked, records from the church's Southern California centers were transferred from computer discs to tapes and taken to rented storage facilities in Ventura, Orange and Riverside counties outside Los Angeles County to create possible jurisdictional problems for the police.

Electronic machines that erase magnetic tapes "were set up in a row right next to the storage racks where the daily backup tapes were kept," Azneran said. "We drilled on a regular basis being able to destroy the information on those magnetic tapes in a given amount of time, which is what we thought we would have should there be a raid."

And what if the FBI or IRS tried to force their way into the actual computer centers?

The Scientologists had thought of that, too, Azneran said. "Earlier on in the computer rooms, the glass... that had been installed was all two-inch, two-and-a-half-inch proof glass so that they couldn't break in with sledge hammers and so forth."

Punishment

and escape
Why are the Aznerans saying such terrible things about their former colleagues?

It goes back to 1986 - specifically, Jan. 24, the day the reclusive L. Ron Hubbard, 74, died of a stroke at his ranch in Creston, Calif. There was some struggle within Scientology's top ranks to succeed Hubbard, and Vicki Azneran found herself in the wrong faction, she says.now.

As a result, she was sent to the Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF), a military-like work detail that former members say exists at nearly all major Scientology centers. Her assignment was to Happy Valley, a Scientology camp in the California desert. Guards ordered her to run wherever she went and sleep with a dozen women in one room, and a female guard stayed with her when she showered, she said."

She herself had dispatched dozens of others to the RPF for misdeeds against the church, she said. She had personally done stints in the RPF on her way up the RPF on her way up the Scientology ladder. But this time was different, she

said. This time, she was sick. A uterine infection gave her a fever, and the guards wouldn't let her leave to see a doctor.

So in March of 1987, when two companions ran away and later came back in a rented car, she joined them and left. She had decided, as had Richard, it was time to leave Scientology, she told lawyers.

Their separation from the church seemed amicable. They even accepted a \$20,000 loan, to be paid back at 5 percent interest over 10 years. They took the money and started a private investigation firm in Dallas.

But Vicki and Richard Azneran

held a grudge.
On April 1 this year (1988) they filed a \$70-million lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles against the Church of Scientology of California, RTC and other church divisions, and several Scientology executives. The 11-count suit claimed false imprisonment, infliction of emotional distress, loss of consortium, conspiracy, fraud, breach of contract, invasion of privacy and breach of duty to pay minimum wage and overtime.

Scientology lawyers denied the charges.

Suing their lawyer

On June 15, Scientology lawyers called Yanny, the former lawyer, to a meeting. "They told me they were going to sue me," Yanny said. "Howard Weitzman (a prominent Los Angeles lawyer) said they wanted to make this all go away. He said to me, "This doesn't have to hanne if you can make the to happen if you can make the Azneran case go away."
"End of meeting."

"And so I got sued, And fur started flying."

The Church of Scientology International, the Church of Scientology of California and RTC charged in the suit, filed eight days after the meeting, that Yanny violated the attorney-client privilege. According to the Scientologists, Yanny presided over a series of "clandestine meetings" in March at his Hermosa Beach home with various Lawyers, aides, the Aznerans and Bent Corydon. Corydon, of Riverside, Calif., wrote the 1987 book L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?, and has faced a barrage of litigation from the church.

The Scientologists said that Yanny, who had inside information, now was aiding, even encouraging, the Aznerans. As proof, the Scientologists presented affidavits from two former employees of Yanny who said they were present during the meetings with the Aznerans and Corydon. The Scientologists also submitted photographs, taken by a private investigator, showing Corydon's car parked behind Yanny's house, On the basis of this information, a California Judge ruled that neither Yanny nor his lawyers could represent the Aznerans because of an appearance of impropriety.

Although Yanny acknowledged a friendship with the Aznerans and Corydon, he said he has not helped them with their suits. But the Scientologists had other charges as well. Their suit said that of the \$1.8-million Yanny's firm billed the sect in four years, a substantial portion was padded or fraudulent. And they said that Yanny performed incompetent work "while under the

influence of drugs and alcohol."

Later they amended the suit. They dropped the part about dropped the parincompetence, drugs and alcohol.

mirror

Joe Yanny took a plane from Los

Angeles to Dallas and then another to Pittsburgh last June (1988). In Pittsburgh, he rented a car to go to his sister's home in Bellaire, Ohio:

He said he though he was being followed.

The Grateful Dead, one of his clients, was playing in Buckeye Lakes while he was in Ohio, so Yanny and three friends got into the car and drove to the concert: (Continued On Page 7)

By Stephen Koff St. Petersburg Times.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. Dec. 12, 1988 - Operating under auspices of the Church of Scientology are dozens of groups, many of them separate legal entities. Untangling Scientology's lines of organizations can be difficult; even the sect's own charts that have been used in court cases are complex. Here are some of Scientology's organizations.

Flag Service Organization - The legal name of Scientology's Clearwater (Fla.) operation, which serves as the sect's spiritual headquarters. Before 1981 the organization was part of the Church of Scientology of California, and Pinellas County (Fla.) officials contend that Flag is still an "alter ego" of the California church. The distinction could be worth millions of dollars in tax exemption, and Scientology lawyers deny the Pinellas claim.

Sea Org - Short for Sea Organization, a corp of dedicated Scientologists who wear navy-style uniforms and sign billion-year loyalty contracts. (Scientologist believe in reincarnation.) Before Scientology's move to Clearwater in 1975, members of the Sea Org served with sect founder L. Ron Hubbard aboard ships roaming the globe.

International Association of Scientologists - A group formed by church leaders in 1984 to combat "external" threats to Scientology such as lawsuits and critical media coverage. Membership in the association makes one an official member of the church, according to association publications.

The Freewinds • A 500-passenger ship bought in 1986 by the International Association of Scientologists. Previously berthed in St. Petersburg as the cruise ship Boheme, the Freewinds was renovated and now is based in the southern Caribbean, where upper-level Scientology training is offered. Among those who have cruised are Lisa Marie Presley, the daughter of Elvis, who took a honeymoon trip on the ship in October.

Bridge Publications
Publisher of L. Ron Hubbard's
works, including his Battlefield
Earth science fiction series and the
seminal Scientology work
Dianetics: The Modern Science of
Mental Health. Bridge is a for-profit
company.

Concerned Businessmen's Association of America - A Glendale, Calif. - based group of

Scientologists that promotes drugfree living through its "Way to
Happiness" book and like-named
campaign, targeted to school-age
children. The association's
Intertribal Council brought
American Indian leaders to
Scientology's Clearwater
headquarters in February (1988) to
talk about drug treatment programs.
A related group, called the Hubbard
Foundation, did detoxification of
the Blackfeet reservation in
Montana "for a while," said Jim
Ferres, Blackfeet treatment services
director. "They don't do it
anymore... I view alcoholism as a
disease, and don't believe in this
guru kind of stuff."

Narconon - A Scientologist-run drug education and rehabilitation program based on a regimen of megavitamins and saunas. Narconon boasts an 80 percent success rate, but health officials and former Narconon employees dispute that claim. Narconon offices were among those raided in the Spanish investigation of Scientology in November.

(Ed note - in a March 29, 1989 story, the St. Petersburg Times also reported that 75 Scientologists were to go before an Italian court in Milan to face a list of charges including fraud, extortion and tax evasion related to the Italian Scientology, Dianetics, and Narconon operations. The action followed a massive investigation started in 1981)

WISE - An acronym for World Institute of Scientology Enterprises, the sect's division that teaches "Hubbard management tech" to businesses and professionals. Among the Scientologist-run consulting firms licensed under WISE are Singer Consultants (specializing in chiropractors), Sterling Management Consultants (dentists) and Uptrends (computer professionals). Anywhere from 20 percent (a Singer estimate) to 50 percent (an Uptrends figure) of WISE clients wind up taking Scientology courses or buying Hubbard books.

Citizen's Commission on Human Rights - A Scientology division that crusades against many applications of psychiatry, particularly the use of Ritalin, a drug used to control hyperactivity in children. Scientology has a distinctly, anti-psychiatric, antimedical bent, which psychiatrists say is a result of Dianetics being shunned by organized medicine.

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