

Glendale News-Press

Since 1905

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Cult awareness group being sued



Raymond Watt/Glendale News-Press

"This brings the total of lawsuits by Scientology against CAN to 13. I personally am involved in six," says Priscilla Coates of the Cult Awareness Network as she holds some of the litigation filed against her.

By Gabor Komaromy
Glendale News-Press

Seven self-professed "parishioners" of the Church of Scientology have filed religious discrimination lawsuits against the Cult Awareness Network and five members of the group, including a Glendale resident, in Glendale Superior Court.

In the lawsuits, filed Friday and Monday, the plaintiffs allege that they have been denied access to the Cult Awareness Network's national convention, to be held in November, on grounds of their religious beliefs.

The seven lawsuits — practically identical except for the plaintiffs' names — claim that the "plaintiffs wrote to (the Cult Awareness Network) asking them to clarify within 10 days, whether or not (they) could attend the CAN convention."

It is alleged that the plaintiffs "had been told that even though (they were) members of the CAN, because (they were) parishioners of the Church of Scientology, (they) would be refused admittance to the convention," according to the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs apparently "made clear that if they didn't receive an answer within 10 days," they would assume the "answer was no." They allegedly received no reply.

Priscilla Coates of Glendale, one of the five defendants named in the suits and director of the local chapter of CAN, said that the plaintiffs — Charles Van Breemen, Vicki J. Dries, Gary Gum, Bob L. Nielson, Bob Schuch, Patricia Ross and Sandra Woodard — never applied to attend the conference.

"To attend the convention, one has to fill out an application and send in the money," Coates said.

"There is at least one member of the Church of Scientology who applied to attend and will be there. These seven have not turned in applications."

"My clients sent off for information but they never received anything," said Steven Hayes, the attorney representing the seven plaintiffs. "They were not provided with the necessary forms to apply to attend the convention, even though they expressly requested these forms."

Coates said that the applications were available to all members at the same

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LAWSUITS

From A1

time.

"The forms were included with the August edition of our monthly newsletter and all members received a copy," she said.

A lawsuit, similar to the ones filed in Glendale, was filed in Los Angeles Federal Court by Donna Casselman. Her attorney, Michael Stoller, said the applications were not available at the time his and Hayes' clients wrote the letters.

"These individuals wanted to open up a dialogue with CAN to exchange ideas about religious beliefs," he said. "Their requests to attend the convention were ignored."

"This is plain discrimination, like the blacks were discriminated against in the '60s, only this time it's against Scientologists."

Coates said she never saw the alleged requests. "I don't recall receiving any letters about attending the convention from these people," she said.

"But I'm not surprised that they sued us about it. This brings the total of lawsuits by Scientology against CAN to 13; I personally am named in six."

Coates said that to become a "member" of CAN, one only needs to send \$30 to the Chicago headquarters to receive the newsletter. To become a voting member, a so-called "affiliate," there are other requirements.

"I have heard from some of these people (who filed the suits) — received from them letters demanding that I admit them as affiliates," she said.

The complaints filed in court also contain sweeping allegations about CAN.

"(CAN), despite its purported goals . . . is actually engaged in unlawful and evil conduct, in 'mind control' and hired persons with criminal backgrounds to kidnap, sexually abuse, mentally abuse, intimidate and coerce persons by depriving them of food and water and forcing them to take drugs against their will, all under the guise of educating them about their religious . . . freedoms."

Coates dismissed these allegations as ridiculous. "The Church of Scientology has a 'fair game' policy: anyone who speaks out against them is a fair game to be harassed, sued or destroyed in any way possible," she said. "These suits are just another examples of this attitude."

Cynthia Kissel, of Wonder Lake, Ill., executive director of CAN, was also named as a defendant in the suits. She said she hadn't seen the complaints and could not comment on them.

Also named as defendants in the lawsuits are Rachel Andres, national board member of CAN and executive director of the Commission on Cults and Missionaries for the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles; Corey Slavin, a member of the Commission on Cults and CAN; and Herbert Slavin, a member of CAN's convention committee.

NATION

Scientologists sue anti-cult group

Church alleges discrimination after it is barred from joining

Associated Press

BOSTON — Scientologists, long a target of deprogrammers, have gone to court to try to turn the tables, claiming that they were illegally barred from joining an anti-cult group.

In a flurry of lawsuits filed around the nation, dozens of members of the Church of Scientology said they tried to join the Cult Awareness Network but were rejected because of their church affiliation.

Many of the lawsuits were filed last week after a federal grand ju-

ry indicted three alleged members of the Cult Awareness Network on charges that they conspired to abduct and deprogram an heir to the Du Pont chemical fortune.

The Chicago-based network, which has drawn fire from Scientologists, the Unification Church and other groups with its anti-cult efforts, denies any link to the case and said Scientologists are trying to destroy their organization.

"We seem to be the target of a campaign of harassment," Cynthia Kisser, the network's executive director said Friday. "In the past two days we've had 19 (Scientology) lawsuits dumped on us."

She said 30 lawsuits brought by the Scientologists are pending, most of them alleging religious discrimination.

Kisser and other critics said the Church of Scientology, founded by the late science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, targets emotionally vulnerable people with high-pressure recruiting and self-improvement programs.

The church claims several million members.

Scientologists said the lawsuits reflect a growing backlash against

cult deprogrammers, who have been accused of kidnapping devotees of unusual religious groups and pushing them to renounce their beliefs.

"There's only so many people you can kidnap, and people are starting to get upset about it," said David Aden, a Scientology spokesman in Boston.

Chris Garrison sued the network in federal court last week, saying he tried to join the group's Boston affiliate to talk to its members and reform its methods. But he said he never heard back after mailing an application form.

"We only want to talk to them," he said. "We want to get this organization back to its stated, educational purposes and away from discrimination."

Kisser said the network's aim is to educate people about cults and provide voluntary counseling to victims of groups like the Scientologists.

She dismisses accusations that network members have abducted cult members: "We are not a criminal group. We don't engage in kidnapping."

Scientologists Win a Battle in Long War

■ **Religion: Judge says Cult Awareness Network must let church members attend L.A. convention. But conference organizers fear longtime foes will disrupt activities.**

By JIM NEWTON
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Members of the Church of Scientology won a court victory over a longtime foe Friday, clearing the way for a group of Scientologists to attend the Cult Awareness Network's national convention in Los Angeles next week.

The ruling in Los Angeles County Superior Court is the latest development in an

escalating feud between the two organizations. The battle erupted in mid-1991 and has resulted in dozens of lawsuits. On one day alone, Scientology members filed 21 lawsuits against the network in various state and federal courts, according to network officials.

"There appears to be a concerted effort by the Church of Scientology to litigate CAN to death," Cynthia Kisser, the network's executive director, said Friday. "It's become a terrible situation for us."

Friday's ruling means that eight Scientologists will be allowed to attend next week's conference, which is being held at a Ramada hotel. But it does little to resolve a titanic legal and public relations battle being waged between Scientologists and the network.

Founded in 1978, the nonprofit Cult Awareness Network provides callers and

media representatives with information about Scientology and other groups, and it suggests ways of evaluating any organization to determine if it is a destructive cult. Some network literature refers to Scientology as a cult, though Kisser said the network does not officially label that organization or any other.

Scientologists say they are a religion, not a cult. They accuse the network of "supporting violent, criminal activity," including the kidnapping of Scientologists—a charge that network officials vehemently deny. The Scientologists have launched a national campaign to "reform" the network and show no signs of relenting.

In addition to the lawsuits filed by its members nationwide, the Church of Scientology has peppered Los Angeles religious leaders with letters urging them to withdraw their support of the network. Scien-

tologists have also repeatedly picketed the network's Chicago office. Scientologists also filed suit against the hotel where next week's conference will be held, and pickets have appeared outside the hotel every week for the past month.

Scientology officials said that its members—and not the organization—are filing the lawsuits.

"We believe that the [network] seriously needs to be reformed," said church spokeswoman Lisa Goodman. "They plan kidnappings and other things that we very, very strongly oppose."

Goodman said Scientology leaders have been told that the network discusses criminal activities such as kidnappings during its conferences. Scientologists say they want to attend the event to urge the network not to commit such crimes.

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SCIENTOLOGY: Church Wins Suit

Continued from B1

"We want to engage them in a dialogue, and the only way to do that is to be there," Goodman said.

Network officials dismiss those allegations as absurd, fearing that the Scientologists' real motivation is to disrupt the conference or intimidate participants. Many of the 350 or so people who plan to attend the conference are former cult members. Some are former Scientologists—and network officials said they worry that those people might be frightened by the presence of Scientologists.

Insisting they want to attend the conference only to participate in its discussions, eight Scientologists who paid the network's \$30 membership fee filed suit in Superior Court on Oct. 5. Two weeks ago, they asked for an injunction to force network officials to allow them to attend.

Despite the network's objections, Judge Thomas C. Murphy granted that request.

"These are eight members of CAN who were being denied their right to attend this conference

because of their religious beliefs," said lawyer Steven L. Hayes, who represented the Scientologists.

"This is four ladies and four men. They're not a trained SWAT team."

Murphy's order prohibits the network from "denying or refusing admittance to plaintiffs to a convention of Defendant Cult Awareness Network." In comments from the bench, Murphy also told both sides he expected them to behave at the conference or risk being called to appear before him again.

Despite Friday's ruling, the litigation between the network and the Scientologists is certain to continue. Lawyers for the Scientologists and the network are scheduled to be in federal court Monday, where they will argue a similar case before a federal judge.

In cases filed elsewhere, Scientologists argue that they are being discriminated against by the network. As in the case decided Friday, many of those actions involve Scientologists who have paid the network's \$30 membership fee and then argued they are entitled to

privileges as network members.

In one suit, Scientologists argued that they should be allowed to volunteer at the network's Illinois headquarters. Other cases involve Scientologists who want to form their own affiliates of the network, a move that network officials believe is an attempt to subvert the organization.

Under network rules, each affiliate gets to vote for network board members. Leaders of the organization fear that the Scientologists would use the affiliates to elect their own board members and then dissolve the network. Scientologists say they merely want to participate as full members.

Although the Cult Awareness Network has prevailed in nearly all of the cases that have been resolved, they acknowledged that Friday's ruling was a setback. Still, they pledged to obey it and move forward with their conference.

"We certainly will comply with the court's order," Kissner said. "If the plaintiffs attend the conference, we trust that they will behave."

HIGHLIGHTS

FEUD CONTINUES: Members of the Church of Scientology won a court victory over a longtime foe Friday, clearing the way for a group of Scientologists to attend the Cult Awareness Network's national convention in Los Angeles next week. B1

Cult girl 'frightened to talk'

Chichester Observer (THURSDAY, November 26, 1992) 9



OPEN TALK: Jon Alack (left), Bonnie Woods and the Rev. Richard Griffiths. - Photo sales no. 8038A.

A worried mother feared her Scientologist daughter had gone to America. And her attempts to talk to Kathleen Wilson, who joined the cult when she worked in a Chichester shoe shop, failed.

Kathleen, who has been living at the cult's East Grinstead base, told her mother, Margaret Wilson, she was going to America and wanted her passport.

Mrs Wilson refused to send the passport because she was worried she might never see her daughter again.

She contacted Kathleen's friends Lorna Bowden and Steve Cooper, who lived in the Chichester area, but their attempts to ask her to visit her mother led to a scuffle with her "handlers" at East Grinstead.

Worried Mrs Wilson was sure her letters were not being passed on to Kathleen.

And she said one of her daughter's letters to her was partly written by another person with different hand-writing.

She could not speak to her daughter on the phone to see if she was still in East Grinstead. "I put 58 in coins into a phone box and they kept

BY BRIAN WARREN

telling me she wasn't available. I was given excuse after excuse."

Lorna and Steve went to East Grinstead to see if Kathleen wanted to go to America and to ask her to visit her mother first.

"It's really frightening. There were security guards in uniforms everywhere and people

watching you from every window," said Lorna.

"I was trying to tell Kathleen that her mum's really worried, but they wouldn't let me speak to her on her own."

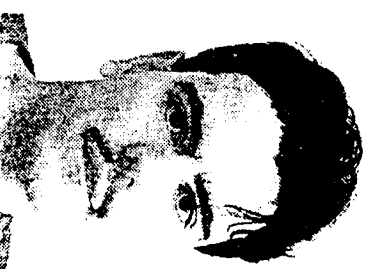
Lorna said her friend's "handlers" stuck with her and Kathleen seemed frightened to talk.

When they were leaving Steve decided to try to grab Kathleen so they could talk to her. He shoved a "handler" out of the way, but the man "pushed Kathleen to the

ground and wrapped his arms and legs around her."

Steve was surrounded by "security guards" and yelled at Lorna to let their rottweiler dog out of their car. The crowd parted and they managed to leave.

Scientology spokesman Barbara Bradley said Kathleen had not gone to America and was upset after the incident. She did not think Kathleen would want to talk to the Observer.



Steve Cooper - Photo sales no. 8034-11.

26 NOVEMBER 1992

ENGLAND

'Best way to make money is to found a religion'

Jesus is a fantasy implanted in our minds millions of years ago, according to the Scientology cult.

And L Ron Hubbard, who founded Dianetics and Scientology, dabbled in anti-Christian rituals with a disciple of black magician Aleister Crowley.

Former Scientologists Jon Atack and Bonnie Woods spoke to a Chichester audience of head teachers and representatives from churches,

Scouts, local councils and the police.

Mr Atack, who thought the city was the cult's latest target, said Scientology has "200 front groups" including Narconon, the drug charity which has former Chichester man John Wood as its British president.

Hubbard, a science fiction writer who had been involved in black magic in the 1940s, once told a friend "the best way to make money is to found a religion." His followers believe

humans are made of spirits, called thetans, brought to Earth 75 million years ago by Xenu, a galactic tyrant.

"They were put around volcanos, exploded with hydrogen bombs, packaged in clusters and exposed to movies for 36 days, which were the future culture of Earth.

"The Christian religion, according to Hubbard's secret doctrines, was a fantasy. Hubbard told Scientologists to tell an 'acceptable truth'.

"So if you say Hubbard

said Christ was an im-plant, they will say Hubbard didn't say that. If you show them Hubbard's bulletin they will say you've misinterpreted it," said Mr Atack.

The cult uses "manipulation rather than brainwashing". New recruits carry out prolonged meditation techniques to induce trance states, which make them susceptible.

The bizarre training involves using phrases from Alice in Wonderland and repeating questions while another per-

son tries to distract them, and every aspect of their personal life is recorded.

The expensive courses include counting people on the street for £1,000 and hearing about Xenu and thetans for £3,000. Mr Atack believes the highest course would "reveal" that Hubbard is his followers' god.

He said Scientologists have "had their minds changed to such an extent that re-entry into normal society and to normal thinking takes years."

Taking all the courses would cost about £200,000. The cult's East Grinstead base "takes about £100,000 a week."

Both Mr Atack and Mrs Woods urged Chichester people to show compassion to the cult's members.

He said: "They cannot help it, they have been taken over. I am opposed to the technology, the teaching and the practice of Scientology, not the human beings involved. They are victims."



PAYING ATTENTION: The audience listens to Jon Atack. Photo sales no. 8039 2

Article a gross distortion

3/14/92

Sir, - In your issue of November 26, Brian Warren gives rein to Mr Attack's fantasy in an article about the Church of Scientology.

The publication is a gross distortion of the truth deliberately designed to whip up antagonism against the Church.

Why is Attack attacking a religious group which has freed over 100,000 people from the ravages of drugs and which puts more people on the road to total freedom than all other groups combined?

Mr Attack fails to mention that a series of his applications to join

the Church were rejected and his vendetta against the Church is founded on a combination of "hell hath no fury like an applicant scorned. If I can't have Scientology then nobody else will".

Mr Attack's recklessness in distinguishing between the truth and falsehood is amply demonstrated by his wrongly attributing the heading of the article to Mr Hubbard. It was George Orwell, author of the book "1984" who wrote that the way to make a million is found a religion. Mr Attack accuses Mr Hubbard of being involved in black

magic when it was Mr Hubbard who broke up an evil black magic ring in the late 1940s.

It is ironical that Mr Attack accuses Mr Hubbard of fantasising when he himself is doing just that. The Church continues to expand while Mr Attack joins the queue with others in their failed attempts to discredit the Church.

Barbara Bradley
Community Affairs
Director,
Church of Scientology
Saint Hill Manor,
East Grinstead.

LETTERS

Questions to answer

Sir, - I think Jon Atack, who seems to be the chief antagonist of Scientology in your area, should answer the following questions: (1) How many thousands of pounds has he earned from providing unsuspecting family members for his "advice" on Scientology? (2) Does he deny he earned £5,000 recently for helping "change someone's mind" about Scientology? (3) Did he instigate and/or agree with the violence (which involved a knife and the arrest of one of his cohorts) used in the attempted abduction of Kath Wilson? (4) Did he obtain some of his documents from his friend who stole them from the church of Scientology and was prosecuted for such?

Your articles are very erroneous save for one point. Yes, Scientology is expanding in the south, as it is all over the world. It expands, despite at-

tacks of this nature, because it works and people tell other people about it.

Are you upset that word of mouth is a more powerful communication medium than sensational press? What happened to press impartiality?

Roger Kaye,
Southern Region Chairman,
Dianetics & Scientology,
West Street,
Poole.

● Sir, - I wish to associate myself with the director of Scientology's Social Affairs defence of the Church of Scientology.

Recently I met someone who was so impressed by the spiritual benefits offered by Scientology - which gives the certainty of salvation, that is only to Scientologists - that she paid over £20,000 within the first four months for the initial courses.

Undoubtedly Ms Bradley, the director, will back me up when I say that these courses must

have been of high quality.

Like all good things, one must pay for the especial Truth which is offered by Scientology. Surely you are willing to make that sort of sacrifice, to reach perfection and have the gift of eternal life?

One thing puzzles me: it costs tens of thousands of pounds to attain this summit of perfection - a summit reached by only one person outside Scientology, Jesus Christ.

I would like to know where the money goes, I am sure that Ms Bradbury will kindly enlighten us.

For those who do not have this sort of money available through poverty, and those unfortunate people whose application to join the church was rejected: let me remind them that salvation through Jesus Christ cost nothing and is available to all who want it.

A concerned citizen.

Name and address supplied

CHICHESTER
Observer LETTERS

17/12/92

Reply to attacks

Sir, - I am responding to Scientologists Roger Kaye and Barbara Bradley's attacks in the Chichester Observer. Taking up Mr Kaye's questions first: my income from advising families who wish to help a member caught up in Scientology is far less than the routine cost for counselling at Mr Kaye's Scientology franchise.

I have never earned anything like £5,000 for counselling a Scientologist. I have never met or spoken to any member of Kathleen Wilson's family, and Mr Kaye's assertion that "one of my cohorts" was involved in the alleged attempted of Kathleen Wilson is entirely unfounded.

I am opposed to kidnapping, including the psychological kidnapping practised by Scientology. If Kathleen's family had approached me, by now she might have seen some of the enormous amount of material withheld by Scientology from its members.

I presume that Mr Kaye's question regarding documents received from a "friend" refers to Gerald Armstrong. Mr Armstrong has never provided me with documents, but Mr Kaye fails

to say that while Scientology did bring suit against Mr Armstrong, the court found strongly in Mr Armstrong's favour.

Indeed the California judge ruled that: "In addition to violating and abusing its own members' civil rights, the organisation (the Church of Scientology) over the years with its 'fair game' doctrine has harassed and abused those persons not in the church whom it perceives as enemies."

Perhaps Mr Kaye is willing to tell us how many hundreds of thousands of pounds he has collected for himself and the Church of Scientology over the years? Perhaps he can explain the reluctance of his own franchise to repay dissatisfied clients?

Turning to Ms Bradley's letter. Firstly I have yet to see evidence that Scientology has "freed over 100,000 people from the ravages of drugs". Scientology is well known for its exaggeration of statistics, for example publicly claiming six million members when internal membership reports show only 40,000.

I support the findings

of the Oklahoma Mental Health Board which ruled that Scientology's Narconon uses methods which are unsafe. Indeed, a number of people have died while on the 'purification rundown'.

I was not turned down by the Church of Scientology. My membership lasted for almost nine years until I resigned it. During that time I spent an enormous amount of time and money completing the equivalent of 24 of the 27 available levels of Scientology.

Yes, George Orwell did comment that millions were to be made from religion, but so did Hubbard. This is recorded in Lloyd Eshbach's book 'Over my Shoulder' where the author recalls a conversation with Hubbard in 1949. Hubbard said: "I'd like to start a religion. That's where the money is." Two other former friends of Hubbard have confirmed this assertion. At his death Hubbard's estate was valued at £648 million, so his assertion was obviously correct.

Hubbard's involvement with black magic is not disputable. Two witnesses have been interviewed and a transcript

was made of the bizarre sexual ceremonies that Hubbard participated in. Hubbard recorded his admiration for 'the Great Beast' Aleister Crowley in a 1952 lecture series.

I have spent nine years researching Hubbard and Scientology and my work has been cited in academic papers. I have a collection of over 50,000 pages of Scientology-related material, including testimony from and interviews with over 150 people.

Mr Kaye and Ms Bradley are at a disadvantage. They have done no independent research, but simply believe whatever the Church of Scientology chooses to tell them. I am perfectly willing to publicly debate these issues with either of them.

Jon Atack,

Avalon,
Cranston Road,
East Grinstead.