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Scientologists accuse local woman

By Sophie Yarborough
Glendale News-Press

Members of a group led by a supporter of the Church of Scientology have alerted Glendale police to alleged "deprogramming" activities of a Glendale woman.

Kevin Hulce, a member of the Church of Scientology, along with two members of the Deprogramming Survivor's Network, accused Priscilla Coates of conspiring with Hulce's parents to turn him away from the religious group formed by the late science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.

"Because Priscilla Coates lives in Glendale, Kevin thought the police might like to be aware of what was going on," said Bob Lippmann, West Coast spokesman for Deprogramming Survivor's Network.

Coates, 54, is former president and di-

rector of Cult Awareness Network, and now is Los Angeles chairwoman of CAN.

CAN provides educational information on about 200 groups or cults it considers to be destructive.

Although Lippmann said the Deprogramming Survivor's Network has no particular religious affiliation, Coates said the group's leader, Isaac Brooks, has worked with the Church of Scientology in the past and may be a member.

Coates denies any role in deprogramming Hulce, but said she was approached by Hulce's parents as well as his best friend and provided them with information on Scientology.

Coates also said she was not surprised by the complaint, since she has been harassed and followed by Scientologists in the past.

"They want to change my mind and tell me that they're a wonderful group," Coates said.

About a year ago, people who she believes were Scientologists distributed leaflets along her street with an anonymous letter telling neighbors she was a crook and criminal, Coates said.

Agent Christopher Loop of the Glendale Police Department met with Hulce and two other people who came with him Friday who said they were from the Church of Scientology.

"There is no basis on anything they provided that would indicate the person they are pointing their fingers at has done anything illegal," said Loop.

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§ Loop said he plans to bring the complaints to the attention of the district attorney's office, but doesn't see any reason for an investigation.

"We don't go out on wild goose chases just because an allegation has been made," he said.

About 13 lawsuits have been filed against CAN since December 1991, Coates said.

She added that five or six of these name her in them.

"The Church of Scientology is one of the most litigious groups in the world," she said.

The Church of Scientology has often used other groups as fronts and used lawsuits to intimidate their enemies, said Daniel Leipold, an attorney for CAN.

"You will find that everyone who makes these allegations are Scientologists or are controlled by Scientologists," he said.

The litigious mentality is even a part of the written philosophy, Leipold said.

Leipold cited an excerpt from "Magazine Articles on Level O Checksheet" by L. Ron Hubbard that reads: "The law can be used very easily to harass, and enough harassment on somebody who is simply on the thin edge anyway while knowing he is not authorized will generally be efficient to cause his professional decrease. If possible, of course, ruin him utterly."

Leipold believes that CAN's upcoming national conference in November in Los Angeles sparked their talk with the Glendale police.

He believes there will be many more anti-CAN efforts in the future.

"There is a major Scientology-sponsored campaign against my clients," Leipold said. "If they had one shred of evidence to support these allegations, my clients would be in jail."