

50 Scientologists told to leave Britain

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER

MORE than 50 Scientology students were yesterday ordered to leave Britain by immigration officials after arriving on three flights from America.

Many had arrived at Heathrow Airport late on Tuesday night. They were booked into local hotels and guarded by security men until flight departure times yesterday.

A Home Office spokesman said last night that all 74 Scientology students who had arrived in Britain on Tuesday had been refused entry. Although most were provided with overnight accommodation, 23 had been sent back the same day.

The hotel bill will be paid by BOAC which flew the students to Britain from New York. Total cost will be around £250.

The students, who had arrived to study at Scientology's British headquarters at East Grinstead, Sussex, were ordered to leave following a ban imposed by Mr. Robinson, Minister of Health.

He said the Government was satisfied the American-born cult was "socially harmful" and did not consider the East Grinstead arrivals were *bona fide* students.

Robinson challenged

As its members were leaving the country yesterday, the cult's spokesman, Mr. David Gaiman, demanded a public inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Robinson and the activities of three Scotland Yard detectives who are conducting an investigation into Scientology on instructions from the Home Office. He said it had been impossible to take legal action against the Health Minister because he denounced the cult in the Commons and was protected by Parliamentary privilege.

He challenged the Minister to repeat his allegations in public "and then we could use the remedy under the law." Scientologists were already in the process of issuing 14 writs alleging libel on parties who had reported their activities "inaccurately and grossly inaccurately."

Mr. Gaiman claimed they were

"tens of thousands" of Scientologists in the London area alone. It would not be fair to name any of them "when we are in the middle of the biggest witch-hunt since James II."

About 500 Scientologists have hired a hall in the Cafe Royal, London, for a rally this weekend. The management does not object to the meeting. "It is just a business transaction as far as we are concerned," said a spokesman last night.

An international conference of Scientologists will be held at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon, from Aug. 16 to Aug. 18, despite local protests.

Cult's charter flight off—P17

The Daily Telegraph

LOVE-TUG CASE JUDGE ATTACKS CORRUPT' CULT

By GUY R. AIS

THE Church of Scientology was condemned as "corrupt, sinister and dangerous" by Mr Justice LATEY in the High Court yesterday

The judge described the practices of the Californian-based sect, founded by its "messiah," Ronald Hubbard, as "both immoral

and socially obnoxious."

The actions of Hubbard and his helpers were grimly reminiscent of the hunting and bullying of Hitler and his henchmen.

Mr Justice Latey, giving judgment in open court after a private hearing ordered a scientist father to hand over his 7-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter to their 28-year-old other, who had fought for most six years to be re-united with them after she, herself, broke away from the cult.

The judge ordered the cult to stop intimidating and harassing the mother, warning them that failure to do so would be dealt with, with the "utmost severity".

Giving his reasons for taking children away from the father, 32, who has since remarried, the judge said Scientology was corrupt "because it is based on lies and deceit, and as its real objective, money and power for its founder, his wife and those close to him at the top.

"It is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices, both to its adherents who do not toe the line unquestioningly, and to those outside who ridicule or oppose it.

"It is diabolical because it sets out to capture young people, especially children and impressionable young people, and indoctrinate and brainwash them so that they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult, withdrawn from ordinary thought, living, and relationships with others."

Great Courage

He described Hubbard, who went into hiding in 1980 and whose whereabouts are a mystery, and his wife, Mary, as "charlatans and worse." To escape from their clutches, as the mother had done, called for "great courage and resolution," because "the stranglehold is tight and unrelenting, and the discipline ruthless."

The children were at a school controlled by scientologists, whose objectives were to capture the child and its mind. The "baleful influence" of the cult was ever present, and to leave the children with the father would be to leave them "gravely at risk."

But in giving the mother custody, the judge directed that they should not be cut off from their father, "who loves them as they love him." They should be allowed to visit him regularly.

Indicating that he had given his decision in open court as a "warning to others," the judge made a scathing attack on Hubbard.

To promote the cult he had falsely claimed he was a war hero, wounded in action and decorated, with the American Purple Heart.

He was not wounded and he was not so decorated." He had also falsely claimed he had been crippled and blinded in the war, and then cured by techniques practised by cult members.

Hubbard had also claimed he was sent by US Naval intelligence to break up a black magic ring in California. He was not. He was himself a member of that occult group and practised ritual sexual magic in it.

The judge said Hubbard had now disappeared and was being sought by police in America.

Constant threats

Outside the court, the mother, holding back tears, said she was "overjoyed" at the decision. "I am looking forward to a new life with my children. It will be nice to be freed from Scientology.

She was planning a new life in Australia where she hoped to remarry soon.

The children currently live with their father in East Grinstead, West Sussex, where the Scientologists have their British headquarters, and attend a school run principally by the sect.

After the hearing, Mr Michael Garside, who described himself as public affairs officer of the sect, said: "It is an extraordinary judgment, like Alice in Wonderland."

In a statement later, the Church of Scientology said it "regretted" the judge's criticism.

"The church was not a party to the action and therefore had no opportunity to be represented or give evidence.

"The judge was therefore given a one-sided statement and outdated picture, and his finding of facts about the church are substantially inaccurate."

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CULT FATHER LOSES PLEA TO KEEP CHILDREN

THE decision to "rescue" two children from the clutches of the Scientology cult, branded "corrupt, sinister and dangerous" by a High Court judge, was backed by two Appeal Court judges yesterday.

They refused the plea by the father, a Scientologist, to overturn Mr Justice Latey's ruling in July that the children must be handed over to their mother to start a new life in Australia.

The 32-year-old father said the judge had gone too far in his attack on the church and its founder L. Ron Hubbard.

And he claimed this had affected the judge's discretion in deciding what was in the best interest of the children, a boy of 10 and girl of eight.

Mr Justice Latey described the practices of Hubbard and his helpers as "grimly reminiscent of the ranting and bullying of Hitler and his henchmen." He said their brainwashing of children at an early age was "training for slavery."

Lord Justice DUNN sitting with Lord Justice PURCHAS agreed that the judge had expressed himself in "strong and forthright terms." But he said that was no ground for challenging his decision.

He said there was ample evidence that the father had lied on occasion, and the judge could not rely on assurances that the children would be protected from Scientology until they were old enough to make up their own minds.

The children have been living with the father since the couple split up in 1978. But the judges ordered them to be handed over to the 28-year-old mother on Saturday at noon.

Scales tipped

She will take them back to Australia with her new husband, a 36-year-old art dealer, at the beginning of next week.

The father, whose new wife is expecting a child in October, was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords. But he was told he could have reasonable access to the children.

Mr Justice Latey had found that the children were happy and well looked after by the father but he said it was inevitable that if they stayed with him they would be brought up as Scientologists.

Lord Justice Dunn said the Scientology factor "tipped the scales" in favour of the mother. The judge had to balance the risks and to do so he had to make findings about Scientology.

Those findings were not chal-

lenged in the appeal court. "The judge plainly felt strongly that these children were at risk."

Mr Justice Latey had called Hubbard a charlatan.

He had said: "Scientology is both immoral and socially obnoxious. In my judgment it is corrupt, sinister and dangerous. It is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit and has as its real objective money and power for Mr Hubbard, his wife and those close to him at the top."

Infamous practices

"It is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices both to its adherents who do not toe the line unquestioning and to those outside who criticise or oppose it.

"It is dangerous because it is out to capture people, especially children and impressionable young people, and indoctrinate and brainwash them so that they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult, withdrawn from ordinary thought, living and relationship with others."

The mother and father married in 1973 when both were Scientologists. They divorced in 1979 and the mother broke away from the cult.

RELIGIOUS SECT'S FOUR ON COUNCIL

Four members of a controversial religious sect will be returned unopposed as parish councillors for the village of Herringwell, Suffolk, today.

It will be the village's first council election. The four live in the manor house taken over by the Medina Rajneesh sect as its British HQ in 1982. It is home to 140 of the followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

Ma Prem Diana, Ma Simant, Swami Anand Amrito and Swami Anand Neerava have been nominated to the council in their English names: Diana Grant, Derek Hawkins, Christopher Scott and Gillian Westley.

Man went bankrupt after £175,000 gifts to Scientologists

By Lin Jenkins

A MATHEMATICS graduate who founded his own computer company, went bankrupt after he "recklessly and cynically exploited" easy credit from banks, finance and credit card companies to give more than £71,000 in 17 months to the Church of Scientology.

Mr Adrian Thomas Hayman, 38, paid £175,000 to the "corrupt, sinister and dangerous" church over 14 years.

But he began increasing his average annual payments of £8,000 by borrowing.

At a public examination at Tunbridge Wells, Kent, yesterday, he denied a suggestion from Mr Stephen Harley, Assistant Official Receiver, that he borrowed the money in the knowledge it could not be repaid.

Mr Hayman admitted the borrowing had been "rash and commercially wrong".

Described as having a good knowledge of commercial morality and ethics, Mr Hayman claimed the money had been for counselling and training courses run by the church at their British headquarters in St Hill Manor, East Grinstead, Sussex.

More than £15,000 was paid for three leather-bound volumes autographed by the cult founder, Ron Hubbard, and £16,500 for an autographed "E-meter" — an electronic device used during "therapy".

Mr Harley, who rejected the suggestion that they were valuable religious artefacts, described them as virtually worthless, adding: "You paid for them because you knew it was not for the artefacts, but a donation to Scientology."

Mr Harley said Mr Hayman had run up debts of £250,000 and had a deficiency of £1,009.

Asked if he knew about a court case in 1984 concerning the church and a member who took his two children away from their mother for six years, Mr Hayman replied: "Yes".

Mr Harley then quoted Mr Justice Lately: "Scientology is both immoral and socially obnoxious. In my Judgment it is corrupt, sinister and dangerous. It is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit and has as its real objective money and power."

Mr Harley said: "It seems very difficult for the layman to distinguish between this church and a commercial concern.

"There are areas in this case that cause me concern.

"We have a situation of an experienced businessman recklessly and cynically exploiting the easy availability of credit to obtain monies which he had no real expectation of paying back, and immediately proceeding to put those out of reach of his creditors by putting them in the coffers of an organisation with a somewhat chequered past that has been severely criticised by the judiciary of this country."

Mr Hayman said he did not give details to his creditors of why he was borrowing money.

Mr Hayman, of Woodshill Lane, Ashurst Wood, Sussex, said he thought he could repay the money by gambling on the Stock Exchange. But after dealings worth £750,000, he lost £30,000.

Mr Hayman's wife Jocelyn, 30, a co-director in the computer company, also went bankrupt with a deficit of £13,500.

She told the public examination that all financial transactions were conducted by her husband.

Judge Birks said the public examination in both cases had been concluded.

Friend cleared of Scientology kidnapping

Mother says sect has bewitched daughter

A REUNION between scientist Kathleen Wilson, 23, and her 63-year-old mother, who had not seen each other for more than two-and-a-half years, took place during the trial of Stephen Cooper.

Last Friday, Mrs Margaret Wilson and her daughter met in the well of the court and hugged briefly.

But rather than sharing an emotional moment, Mrs Wilson told her daughter she had been "brainwashed" by scientologists. Her daughter, in turn, accused "instigators and enemies of the church" of duping Mr Cooper into believing she needed to be rescued.

The mother and daughter did not see each other over the weekend — despite, Mrs Wilson said, her attempts to contact her daughter at the cult's headquarters at East Grinstead.

A saddened Mrs Wilson left court on Monday evening, planning to return to her Cleveland home early yesterday, not knowing if her daughter would keep her promise to visit her.

The exchanges between them were witnessed by Cooper, who said: "At least, if I haven't done anything else, I've brought them back together."

Mrs Wilson, who lives at Boosbeck, near Saltburn, told her daughter last Friday: "I haven't seen you for more than two years. You have been saying you will visit for two years. Why don't you come and see me?" Miss Wilson replied: "I will come



Family at odds: Kathleen Wilson with her mother Margaret outside Lewes Crown Court

home." As court officials, lawyers and reporters listened. Mrs Wilson said: "You have made me ill."

"Why don't you visit your father [Ian, 75, who is separated from Mrs Wilson]. He is ill through not seeing you. You've been brainwashed. You don't know what you've put me through."

"All the trouble. Don't you care?" Miss Wilson: "Of

course I care." Mrs Wilson asked why she was accusing Mr Cooper of things he had not done.

Miss Wilson said it was not Cooper, but "the people behind him, who put him up to it". This echoed the claim of cult officials at the court that "apostates", renegade former scientologists, had stirred up Cooper.

But Mrs Wilson blamed the

cult: "It is not good that they keep a daughter away from her mother. You were all I lived for and now I've got nothing. You've thrown your life away. Why?"

Miss Wilson: "I have not." She insisted that she would visit her mother if she would not be kidnapped. Her mother retorted: "Who'd want to kidnap you? You're not a millionaire's daughter." Outside

the courtroom, as Miss Wilson rejoined fellow cult members, her mother said: "I can't get through to her. She's been brainwashed."

"She was quite easy-going as a child, but was easily led and gullible. I had to get her out of trouble at home."

After the acquittal of Cooper, Miss Wilson said the verdict could drive her and her mother further apart.

I feel insulted, says woman as jury decides that she was brainwashed

Reports by John Steele
Courts Correspondent

A MAN who tried to remove a woman from the Church of Scientology was cleared of attempted kidnap yesterday after arguing that "brainwashing" by the cult had turned her into a robot without the ability to decide whether she consented or not to leaving.

Stephen Cooper's "victim", 23-year-old former shoe shop worker Miss Kathleen Wilson, told the jury that she was happy to be at the cult's headquarters at Saint Hill Castle in East Grinstead, East Sussex, and did not consent to being removed.

The court also heard he had admitted to police he intended to "snatch her" against her will.

But Cooper, 27, who runs a newsagent's shop, was cleared at Lewes Crown Court of the charge by a jury which retired at 12.53pm, began their lunch at 1pm and returned with unanimous verdicts at 2pm.

His counsel, Mr John Tanzer, argued that, even though she claimed in court she did not consent to removal, it was possible her free will had been removed by the processes she had undergone in the cult and she did not have "sufficient intelligence and understanding" to decide if she consented.

After the verdict, a delighted Cooper said: "I wasn't confident. I thought the evidence was against me but the jury was fantastic. In my eyes, British justice has won today."

Scientology officials took a different view, warning the verdict would act as a "green



Free: Cooper yesterday

light" to those who wanted to remove members from sects. Miss Wilson, a former flatmate of Cooper, said: "I am outraged."

"I feel insulted by the verdict. Instead of judging Stephen, they judged me. I said I wanted to stay at Saint Hill and I meant it. I was not brainwashed."

Mr Justice Hidden told the jury that Scientology was not on trial and that they did not have to decide if it was a cult or a religion.

The issue was Stephen Cooper's acts and intentions when he went to Saint Hill with another man on the night of Nov 6, 1992.

To prove attempted kidnap, the Crown had to establish four elements — an attempt to remove her, that it was by force, that it was without lawful excuse and that she did not consent.

The first two elements were not challenged — Mr Cooper admitted to police he went to snatch her, "probably against her will", after

being contacted by her mother and the judge ruled he could not offer a defense of awful excuse because that would require a belief that she faced physical danger.

But the judge ruled that there could be a possible defence on the grounds of consent, even though Miss Wilson testified that she did not consent.

This enabled Mr Tanzer to tell the jury some of the evidence suggested a regime in which she was effectively enslaved and robbed of her freewill.

"Kathleen Wilson was a victim. She was deprived of her own free will and Stephen Cooper sought to rescue her. She never said she wanted to be rescued but we say, simply, that is because she couldn't."

"If a member of our society is turned into a robot, turned into a slave, is that person consenting? A robot is programmed as to what to say. The person underneath has been suppressed and enslaved."

Cooper, he said, was not a "malign kidnapper using unwarranted force to take away a damsel manifestly not in distress". Rather, he wanted to "put her in a position" to make her own free choice.

Outside court, Cooper, from Saltburn, Cleveland, said the last two years had been a nightmare. He planned to marry Miss Lorna Bowden, 23, the one-time close friend of Miss Wilson.

"I was only interested in the welfare of Kathleen. We felt she had changed, after joining them. Lorna said she was always easily-led and that she had to look after her at school."

Cult's hopes of improving its image takes a knock

THE acquittal of Stephen Cooper is a major setback for the Church of Scientology in its efforts to dispel its image as a sinister and manipulative cult.

The decision will go down in the demonology of the cult — or, in its own terminology, on the ever-lengthening list of anti-scientology "suppressive acts" — alongside a bench-mark case in the family division of the High Court in 1984.

In that hearing Mr Justice Latey decided a custody dispute between a father who was a committed scientologist and a mother who had left the cult by removing two children from the father and giving them to the mother.

After a three-week trial in which he heard evidence about Scientology and its late founder, the science fiction writer turned spiritual guru, L Ron Hubbard, he said: "Scientology is both immoral and socially obnoxious. In my opinion it is corrupt, sinister and dangerous.

"It is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit and has as its real objective money and power for Mr Hubbard, his wife and those close to him at the top.

"It is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices, both to its adherents who do not toe the line unquestioningly and to those outside who criticise or oppose it.

"It is dangerous because it is out to capture people, especially children and



Ron Hubbard: charlatan'

impressionable young people, and indoctrinate and brainwash them so that they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult, withdrawn from ordinary thought, living and relationships with others."

The cult, which offers endless press releases and glossy brochures to the media, has denounced the Latey hearing as a "travesty of justice" in which; it was not allowed to defend itself.

Scientology was created by Hubbard more than 40 years ago. In essence, he suggested humans are reincarnated from the beginning of time and inside everyone there is a thetan — or spirit — trying to help the human improve.

But the thetan is handicapped by entrains — bad thoughts or past misdeeds — which have to be cleared by the processes of Scientology known as dianetics, to guide

the individual human towards spiritual enlightenment.

The central tool of dianetics is "auditing with an e-meter", a machine which is used when Scientology members are quizzed by "auditors" about their innermost thoughts.

Auditing, the theory goes, enables members to confront and overcome engrams.

Within the cult there is a cadre of dedicated members known as "Sea-Org" whose recruits sign a contract to work for a billion years and they audit their way "up the bridge" of spiritual improvement towards the levels of "clear" and Operating Thetan."

As evidence in the Cooper trial showed, cult members wear uniforms and the East Grinstead castle is patrolled by guards with handcuffs and heavy torches.

The jury heard of "ethics officers" and "ethics penalties" for those committing harmful acts. The "rehabilitation project force" was a euphemism for an internal disciplinary body.

Cooper's lawyers were unable to adduce the Latey judgment in his case but the detailed evidence before the judge in 1984 convinced him that Hubbard, who died in 1986, was a "charlatan and worse" who had lied about his background and war record to promote himself and had created a quasi-religion to make money for himself and his cohorts.

The maker of a programme on Scientology says he has been the victim of 'subtle harassment'. TOM UTLEY reports

Detective on trail of TV pair

American private detective, hired by attorneys acting for the Church of Scientology, has approached friends and relations of the makers of a British television biography of the Church's founder, visiting home addresses discovered by trickery.

He has then spread allegations that the film-makers may be implicated in an international conspiracy of extortion and money-laundering.

Simon Berthon, the executive producer of the film about L Ron Hubbard, shown in Secret Lives series on Channel 4 last night, condemned the detective of activities yesterday as a "peculiar and subtle form of harassment".

He said the Scientologists' agents had somehow managed to establish which telephone numbers he and the film's producer-director, Jill Robinson, had recently rung on their private lines.

Those numbers had then been rung by a woman claiming to be conducting a survey of television-viewing habits. The woman promised a year's free magazine subscription to those who took part in the survey — thereby tricking the film-makers' contacts into revealing their

addresses. She then afterwards the detective, Eugene M Ingram, of Los Angeles, arrived on the friends' doorsteps, saying that he was inquiring about Mr Berthon and Ms Robinson in connection with an international conspiracy of extortion and money laundering.

Mr Berthon said that the allegations appeared to have sprung from a payment of £2,000 that his company had made for access to an archive of material on the Scientologists.

Ms Robinson, 45, said yesterday that about eight or her friends and associates in England, including her parents and her hairdresser, had been visited by Mr Ingram. Four of those had earlier received telephone calls from a woman claiming to be conducting a survey on television-viewing habits.

She said that she and her crew had also been followed by detectives in the United States, Canada and England, ever since they started making the film last June.

"It's a bit spooky," she said. "I just don't see what it is they hope to achieve, except they seek to intimidate me."

Mr Berthon said that when friends began to complain that they had been visited by Mr Ingram, he checked with



L Ron Hubbard, church founder, and film producer Jill Robinson, who said friends and relatives had been telephoned



PHOTO: ERIC POWERS

12 friends and relatives whom he had recently telephoned from home.

"Out of 12 calls made, I have discovered that nine have been telephoned by a woman offering a free magazine if they take part in a TV viewing-habit survey and give their name and address." Three of those nine had subsequently been visited by Mr Ingram.

"This is well beyond coincidence," said Mr Berthon. "Among them was a friend and neighbour, Charlotte Joll, whom he had telephoned recently to accept a children's-party invitation

for his daughter. She said: "Last Friday afternoon a man rang on the doorbell showing me his private investigator's licence and then asked asked me if I knew someone he was trying to get in touch with."

"He showed me three photographs of a man I had never seen before and said this guy was wanted for some kind of offence to do with getting money fraudulently. I had no idea what it was about. Then he mentioned Simon Berthon's name. Did I know him? I said 'Yes, our children are friends.' I then remembered that our au pair

had told me a couple of days earlier that she had been rung by someone purporting to do be doing research on our television viewing habits, offering her a year's subscription to our favourite magazine and asking for our address."

Miss Joll said that Mr Ingram had not mentioned the Scientologists.

Another of Mr Berthon's friends who was asked to take part in a telephone survey was Dorothy Byrne, the editor of ITV's *The Big Story*.

She said that Mr Ingram had telephoned her at her office at 20-20 Vision, saying

that he was a private detective investigating extortion, and asking for information about Mr Berthon and Ms Robinson.

"I told him that Simon was one of the most highly regarded people in television. I also told him that in Britain we don't really appreciate private detectives hanging around outside people's houses."

"Then on Friday I received a phone call from a woman saying that she was doing a survey of TV viewing habits. I told her I didn't want to answer her questions. She said she represented an orga-

nisation called Clark TV, which makes TV programmes. I thought it was peculiar that they would be doing surveys of viewing habits."

Bernard Clark, chief executive of Clark TV Productions, said yesterday that his company never conducted surveys of that sort. "There is no way we would ever do TV-viewing surveys," he said. "They have made a mistake by using our name."

Another friend of Mr Berthon's who preferred not to be named, said the family au pair had received a telephone call last Thursday from a woman telling 'a cock-and-bull story about a survey'. The au pair had been promised a free magazine subscription and had given her address.

On Sunday Mr Berthon's friend answered the door to a man who said he was a private detective, trying to find a man who had put money into a laundering account.

He showed her a photograph of Mr Berthon getting into his car and asked if she knew him. He then said that Mr Berthon had put the money into the "laundering

LEGAL MOVES

THE SCIENTOLOGISTS are considering taking legal action against Channel 4 following last night's highly critical programme on the activities of their founder. L Ron Hubbard, writes Victoria Combe Churches Correspondent.

The movement, which has a following of Hollywood stars including John Travolta and Nicole Kidman, has enlisted the services of the libel solicitor, Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners.

The Scientologists claim that the programme, in the *Secret Lives* series, was "grossly unfair" and amounts to a "character assassination" of L Ron Hubbard.

Their solicitors have written to the Independent Television Commission attacking the methods used in making the documentary and demanding "immediate intervention".

The Scientology movement is now recognised as a church by the United States tax authorities.

ment made by Mr Berthon and dismissing all allegations against Mr Ingram's conduct as false.

In it, Mr Abelson said that he had hired Mr Ingram to investigate international conspirators who were trying to extort money from Churches of Scientology with help from the media.

Mr Berthon and Ms Robinson had been in touch with some of these people, said Mr Abelson. "Consequently I have retained Mr Ingram, as part of his investigatory duties, to determine whether individuals including Ms Robinson and her producer Simon Berthon are knowingly acting in furtherance of the intentions of the suspected conspirators."

Mr Abelson said in the letter: "Mr Ingram is pursuing his investigation candidly and openly in direct contrast to Ms Robinson's inquiries in the United States. Any complaints about his activities in this regard from your clients are rejected."

For the Church, Mr Wilson said that in preparing the documentary, Mr Berthon's 3MB Television had made no attempt to contact either the



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Picture. ERIC ROBERTS

that he was a private detective investigating extortion, and asking for information about Mr Berthon and Ms Robinson.

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He showed her a photograph of Mr Berthon getting into his car and asked if she knew him. He then said that Mr Berthon had put the money into the "laundering account" and that this was an offence.

The friend said: "I said I was surprised to hear that because he was an upright citizen with a good reputation. He did not mention the Scientologists once.

"I thought 'how the hell did he get my number?' Then we worked backwards.

"The thing that worries me most is how they can get particulars of the numbers Simon had rung."

Asked about these facts this week, the Church of Scientology said: "It sounds very intriguing. It sounds bizarre."

Graeme Wilson, public affairs director of the Church in the United Kingdom, said that Mr Ingram had been hired by an American attorney, Elliot J Abelson of Los Angeles, which acted for the Church. He faxed to *The Daily Telegraph* a letter from Mr Abelson to D.J Freeman, Mr Berthon's solicitor, replying to a complaint of harass-

claim that the programme, in the *Secret Lives* series, was "grossly unfair" and amounts to a "character assassination" of L Ron Hubbard.

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For the Church, Mr Wilson said that in preparing the documentary, Mr Berthon's 3MB Television had made no attempt to contact either the Church of Scientology or Mr Hubbard's authorised biographer.

Instead, Ms Robinson had travelled around America interviewing the "worst possible detractors she could dredge up".

Mr Ingram could not be reached last night.

In 1984 a British High Court judge attacked the Church of Scientology as "corrupt, sinister and dangerous."

"It is sinister," said Mr Justice Latey, "because it indulges in sinister practices both to its adherents who do not toe the line unquestioningly and to those outside who criticise or oppose it." Mr Hubbard died in 1986.

A Home Office spokesman said that he thought it was not a criminal offence to run a bogus telephone survey in order to discover addresses.

"It is deceptive, but I can't see how it could form an offence of deception," he said.