Mr. Moore

F. X. O'Brien

SITOL

7/26/77

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1 - Mr. Adams
1 - Mr. Moore
1 - [redacted]
1 - Mr. F. X. O'Brien
1 - [redacted]
1 - Mr. R. E. Long
1 - Mr. Mintz
1 - [redacted]

PURPOSE: To advise regarding unfounded allegations contained in the "Atlanta Constitution" and "The Los Angeles Times" newspapers on 7/19/77 alleging misconduct by Special Agent (SAS) during the search of the Church of Scientology properties in Los Angeles, California, and Washington, D. C. on 7/8-9/77.

SYNOPSIS: The 7/19/77 issues of "The Los Angeles Times" and "Atlanta Constitution" newspapers contained unfounded allegations of misconduct by Special Agents of the FBI in conducting authorized searches of the properties of the Church of Scientology in the Los Angeles, California, area and Washington, D. C., on 7/8-9/77. Search warrants for the two Los Angeles properties were not restrictive to certain areas and covered the entire buildings. "The Los Angeles Times" article stated, "A Church spokesman called the FBIs' actions 'gestapo like.'" An alleged Special Agent burst into rooms where married couples were sleeping unclothed and burst into shower stalls where people were bathing." SAC-Criminal, Los Angeles, received no reports by search teams that Agents went into rooms occupied by unclothed occupants and burst into shower stalls where people were bathing.

"The Los Angeles Times" article further indicated "One female Church member trying to take a picture of an FBI Agent was struck on the head with a clipboard by the Agent." SAC-Criminal, Los Angeles, advised no Agent struck anyone over the head with a clipboard. SA [redacted] had a camera thrust into his face by a female Scientologist and SA [redacted] moved a clipboard to shield his eyes from the flashbulb and accidently struck the camera which was within a foot of SA Greiner's face.

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CONTINUED-OVER

Throughout the entire search in the Los Angeles area, numerous Scientologists followed Agents, taking hundreds of photographs with flashbulbs in close proximity to the Agents' eyes. SAC-Criminal warned numerous Scientologists throughout the day that they were bordering on interfering with a lawful search and instructed them to leave the area.

In addition, SAC-Criminal advised that every opportunity was given to the Scientologists to produce keys; however, after a reasonable period, it became necessary to forcibly enter some desks and some rooms. At the two locations, Los Angeles Special Agents used utmost restraint and discretion throughout the long search which lasted about 21 hours. Special Agents were subject to various types of harassing activities and verbal abuse.

The "Atlanta Constitution" contained a similar article to "The Los Angeles Times"; however, in addition, states "In the suit, Church officials quoted one of the FBI Agents who allegedly took part in the raids in Los Angeles as saying the sweep was 'The most brutal search and seizure I've ever seen or been involved in.'" SAC-Criminal advised there is no indication any Agent made such a statement. It is obvious that from the above-mentioned newspaper articles that the organization's allegations are in line with known and established tactics of the Church of Scientology when dealing with law enforcement agencies who come in conflict with the Church during the performance of their law enforcement functions.

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In reply to the requests of Los Angeles that FBIHQ contact the Department in an effort to accelerate court action pending in Los Angeles; on 7/22/77, SA [redacted] General Government Crimes Unit, contacted Deputy Assistant Attorney General, John C. Keeney, Criminal Division. Mr. Keeney advised all matters pertaining to the prosecution of this case are to be routinely brought to the attention of U. S. Attorney Earl Silbert, Washington, D. C.

RECOMMENDATION: None For information.

O'Brien to Moore Memo
Re: SITOL

DETAILS: See teletype from SAC-Criminal, Los Angeles to Director, dated 7/20/77 captioned case (attached). Also, see copy of "Atlanta Constitution" and "The Los Angeles Times" articles, 7/19/77, copies attached.

0-10 (Rev. 4-21-77)

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Church Sues FBI Agents, Attorneys for $7 Million

Scientologists Claim Raids, Seizure of Documents Were in Retaliation for Suits Against Government

BY ROBERT RAWITCH
Times Staff Writer

The Church of Scientology Monday filed a $7.8 million damage suit against two Justice Department attorneys and 134 unnamed FBI agents who the church said seized thousands of documents in raids July 8 on two Los Angeles church locations.

The raids were motivated, the church alleged, by the government's desire to retaliate against Scientologists because of the many lawsuits the church has filed against governmental agencies.

Estimates of how many documents were seized have ranged from 20,000 to 100,000. The church claimed the papers were seized so they be used by the government to defend itself against the Scientologists' lawsuits.

Search warrants authorizing the raids in Los Angeles and a third one at the church's headquarters in Washington, D.C., were based on allegations by a former high church official that the hierarchy of the church was involved in extensive criminal activities.

The former official, Michael Meisner, has admitted taking part in three burglaries in the U.S. Courthouse in Washington and has attempted to implicate other church officials in the break-ins.

The alleged purpose of the illegal entries was to obtain documents about the church which it had been unable to obtain through Freedom of Information Act lawsuits.

Scientology considers itself an applied religious philosophy which attempts to increase an individual's self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Attorneys for the church have charged that there was not probable cause to conduct the raids on the church locations and that agents using power saws, crowbars and battering rams did extensive damage to areas not specified in the warrant.

The actions of the FBI constituted a violation of the church First Amendment right to freedom of speech and religion as well as Fourth Amendment right against an illegal search and seizure, the suit said.

A church spokesman called the FBI's actions "Gestapo-like." The suit charged agents "chanting, 'FBI—we have a search warrant'... burst into rooms where married couples were sleeping unclothed... and burst into shower stalls where people were bathing."

One female church member trying to take a picture of an FBI agent was struck on the head with a clip-board by the agent, according to church spokesman Vaughn Young at a Greater Los Angeles Press Club news conference.

At the old Cedars-Sinai hospital complex, 4833 Fountain Ave., now owned by the church, agents "roamed and searched at will" on the upper five floors of the building, the suit said. The search warrant specifically identified the first-floor office area as the focus for the search.

More than 150 specifically identified documents allegedly stolen or copied in the Washington burglaries were sought in the search of the church locations.

Young was particularly critical of the authority given by the search warrant for the FBI to take any documents or evidence about crimes of conspiracy, obstruction of justice or theft of government property.

It was under that authority that the FBI seized the vast majority of the documents in the search. In addition, lock-picking equipment, eavesdropping devices and dossiers on government officials also were taken by the FBI, it was learned.

The Washington Post ___
Washington Star-News ___
Daily News (New York) ___
The New York Times ___
The Wall Street Journal ___
The National Observer ___
The Los Angeles Times Pt II

Date JUL 19 1977

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...Neither of the two Justice Department attorneys named in the action, Henry Schuelke III and Raymond Banoun, could be reached for comment. An FBI spokesman said the bureau would have no immediate comment.

Generally, however, government attorneys and FBI agents have virtually total immunity for actions they perform in their official capacity, Justice Department sources said.

CRITICAL—Vaughn Young, spokesman for the Church of Scientology, at a news conference on FBI raids at church locations here.

0-19 (Rev. 4-21-77)

'GESTAPO' TACTICS HARGED

Scientology Church Suing FBI on Raids

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — The Church of Scientology, whose offices were raided by federal agents last week in Los Angeles and Washington, filed a $7.9 million damage suit in federal court Monday, accusing the FBI of using "Gestapo-like" tactics in the raids.

The church named as defendants two deputy U.S. attorneys and 134 FBI agents who conducted the simultaneous early morning raids in the two cities July 8.

Documents taken in the raids — some of which were believed related to alleged infiltration by church members into various government departments — were ordered temporarily sealed at the request of the church by federal judges in both cities.

In the suit, church officials quoted one of the FBI agents who allegedly took part in the raids in Los Angeles as saying the sweep was "the most brutal search and seizure I've ever seen or been involved in."

The suit said the raids resulted in extensive "unnecessary" physical damage to the church buildings and were "unlawful, unconstitutional ... intrusions into the privacy of its parishioners."

The church said that even when members repeatedly offered to supply keys and to open doors for the agents, they went ahead with sledge hammers, battering rams, power saws, power drills and crowbars to force their way in.

About 30 agents who raided the Los Angeles headquarters shouted, "FBI, we have a search warrant," but went directly to a floor not covered by the warrant, the suit alleged. It said they burst into rooms where "married couples were sleeping unclothed and deliberately invaded their privacy."

The church said an estimated 100,000 pages of documents were seized by the agents although only 156 documents were specified by the warrant, the suit said.

Some of the files seized were "privileged attorney-client documents containing legal strategy in oncoming suits the church has against the government and the planning for possible future suits."

Church officials charged that the raids were part of a "campaign of harassment and retaliation" for the Scientologists' "exposures of government abuse."

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Director's Sec'y

The Washington Post ___
Washington Star-News ___
Daily News (New York) ___
The New York Times ___
The Wall Street Journal ___
The National Observer ___
The Los Angeles Times ___
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