

5 Scientologists Get Jail Terms for

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Five of the ranking leaders of the Church of Scientology, including the wife of the group's founder, were sentenced yesterday to prison terms of up to five years each for their roles in a massive criminal conspiracy to plant church spies in government agencies, steal government documents and bug at least one government meeting.

U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey imposed the sentences in a day-long proceeding at the U.S. Courthouse here in which the defendants admitted their wrongdoing, but attempted to justify their act by contending they overreacted in response to what they perceived as government harassment of their religion.

Four other defendants will be sentenced today.

Richey took the unusual step of ordering the defendants immediately to begin serving their terms while their appeals of their convictions are pending. He said he was taking that step because the defendants' planned appeal of their conviction was frivolous, because of the substantial evidence against them, because they are from

California and had no ties to the Washington community, and because they posed a danger to the community.

Only Mary Sue Hubbard, whose husband L. Ron Hubbard, founded the group approximately three decades ago, remained free after sentencing yesterday.

She was given a conditional five-year term and a \$10,000 fine and was ordered to undergo three-month study by the prison system before any final sentence is imposed. Richey said she could remain free for at least another 10 days because of unspecified health reasons.

"I publicly want to say I accept full responsibility for the charge of which I have been convicted," Hubbard said at one point in the proceedings. "I sincerely regret my wrongdoing. I have done everything within my power to see nothing like this ever occurs in the future."

Richey replied later to Hubbard that she had to live with her conscience, but that "you and I agree we have a precious system of government in the United States. For anyone to use the benefits of those laws or to seek under the guise of those laws to

destroy the very foundation of the government is totally wrong and cannot be condoned by any responsible citizen."

He told her that "we do not have a perfect system," but "one must understand courts have a responsibility to consider the interests of society and the system of justice" in imposing sentences.

He compared the conspiracy of the high church officials to that of high government officials during the Watergate scandal, and gave her the same type of conditional maximum sentence that U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica gave the original Watergate burglary defendants.

The Scientologists have continued to do so yesterday — and continued to do so yesterday that the government had harassed church since its founding by a keeping false reports in government files, investigating the group refusing to grant it blanket tax-exempt status.

The severity of the sentence and the refusal of the judge to let defendants on bond provoked strong reactions from spokesmen.

Spokesman Denis McI

Conspiring to Rob, Bug and Spy on U.S.

the sentences "vicious" and said they were "a mockery of justice . . . a perversion of the criminal justice system; The judge has ignored the broader issues and appears to have let vindictive and fanatical prosecutors do his thinking for him."

The church members sentenced yesterday had suggested through their attorneys that they be allowed to participate in community service programs rather than go to jail.

Richey, known in the past to be one of the federal judiciary's strongest and most outspoken proponents of that concept, said he specifically considered and rejected such sentences in this case because of the need for punishment and the hopes of deterring others from committing such

highest official in the church's "an" office, Henning Heldt, said the law and will not do it, he added, "most people affronted with a government intent to destroy their religion, mockery of their reli-

U.S. Attorney Raymond Heldt's statement was an at the illegality of his

acts had not sunk in. "They have learned nothing. They go after anyone critical of them. They're not concerned about anyone else but themselves. They weren't concerned about the rights of others and they never have been."

Richey said he was "not fully convicted" that Heldt was remorseful and felt a prison sentence was necessary to vindicate the judicial system. He sentenced Heldt to four years in prison and fined him \$10,000.

Another church leader, Duke Snider, also said he believed the government was trying to destroy his religion. Banon again disagreed, saying Snider had simply "violated the law and had to realize such actions will not be condoned."

Richey sentenced Snider to four years in prison and fined him \$10,000.

The next church member sentenced Gregory Willardson, said he realized a year ago that what he had done was "wrong, improper . . . illegal" and said it would not happen again. Richey called Willardson "one of the major architects of this heinous crime" and sentenced him to four years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The fifth Scientologist sentenced

yesterday, Richard Weigand, told the judge that he recognized "the error of my thinking." But Richey called Weigand "the central figure in the cover-up conspiracy," and gave him the same four-year prison term and \$10,000 fine that he had imposed on three other defendants.

The evidence used by the government against the church was gathered in FBI raids on church headquarters here and in Los Angeles on July 8, 1977. The church has vigorously litigated the legality of those raids—said to be the largest ever conducted by the FBI—and will continue to press that issue on appeal.

In August 1978, 11 church leaders were indicted in the conspiracy.

Richey conducted extensive pretrial hearings and ultimately forced the government to accept an unusual agreement to end the case without a trial.

Under that arrangement, approved on Oct. 8, the defendants said they would agree to the government's presentation of evidence against them and be found guilty if they could preserve their right to appeal.