

New secret tapes revealed in lawsuit

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The existence of two more surreptitiously made videotapes involving conversations of a former member of the Church of Scientology was revealed in court Thursday, one day after church lawyers said they had no knowledge of any more such tapes.

The new tapes bring to four the number of meetings in which the former Scientologist, who has attacked the church, was videotaped without his knowledge during meetings with church members who led him to believe they were trying to reform church practices.

Earle C. Cooley, a church attorney who played the first two tapes to a Multnomah County Circuit Court jury Wednesday, told Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer that he did not know about the latter two tapes when Londer asked questions Wednesday about additional tapes.

The tapes involve conversations with Gerald D. Armstrong, a former Scientologist who testified in the Portland fraud trial that Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard and church officials issued false information about Hubbard's educational background, professional standing and military service.

The defense contends that the tapes, made late in 1984, show that Armstrong was involved in a conspiracy to discredit church leaders and to help wrest control of the Scientology financial empire that Armstrong estimated at being worth \$500 million.

Armstrong is a witness on behalf of Julie Christofferson Titchbourne, a Portland woman who is suing Hubbard and two Scientology organizations for fraud arising from representations made to her during her nine-month involvement with the church ending in 1976.

Armstrong said he met several times with persons who claimed they wanted his help in reforming the

church. After learning that those people were Scientologists involved in an attempt to discredit him in court, Armstrong told Londer he assumed that more meetings were taped.

Church attorneys questioned by Londer said Wednesday no more tapes existed. But Cooley notified the judge Thursday morning that during the night he learned of two more tapes made during the same series of meetings.

Cooley's line of questioning with Armstrong before the jury indicated that he planned to use the tapes in subsequent cross-examination. The tapes are expected to arrive in court Friday.

Garry P. McMurry, representing Titchbourne, questioned whether there was legal authorization for invading Armstrong's privacy. That issue will be addressed in court after the tapes arrive.

In cross-examination testimony Thursday, Armstrong said he lied in an affidavit that he signed while he was still a member of the church in an earlier Scientology lawsuit.

Cooley asked him if he signed the affidavit of his own free will at the time, and Armstrong replied, "In Scientology there is no such thing as free will."

Armstrong also said he had lied in a church document he signed in 1977 after serving a period of 17 months of punishment within the church for swearing at a superior official in 1976. The statement said he had greatly benefited from his time on the "rehabilitation project force" operated by the church.

"I ended up thanking my captors for degrading me," he said. Armstrong left the church in December 1981 after spending almost two years doing research with Hubbard's approval for a major Hubbard biography.

Hubbard dropped from public sight in 1980. He is included as a defendant in the Portland case but is not expected to appear in court.