

5-21-85

Scientology trial jurors ignored advertising blitz

By FRED LEESON
of The Oregonian staff

The Church of Scientology in Portland waged an expensive, large-scale advertising campaign throughout the fraud trial that led to a \$39 million verdict against the church and its founder, but jurors said they paid no attention to it.

Printed advertisements appeared frequently in daily and weekly newspapers in the Portland area throughout the 10-week trial, and radio and television commercials were played on several local stations.

Two jurors who were interviewed Monday said the jury's decision was based on long discussions and detailed review of many of the more than 500 exhibits entered into evidence during the 10-week trial.

The jurors, both of whom agreed to talk about the deliberations only if their names were not used, said the biggest single factor in the case was L.

Ron Hubbard, the church's founder, and the documents he wrote that were admitted as evidence.

"The most compelling thing was L. Ron Hubbard himself and how the whole organization is geared to exactly what he wants to do and how he wants them to do it," one juror said.

John Carmichael, a spokesman for the Portland Scientology mission, said the advertisements were part of a nationwide campaign to inform people about Scientology and members who practice it.

He said he could not place an estimate on the amount spent for advertisements in the Portland area, but he said he thought each large ad printed in The Oregonian cost about \$3,000 or \$4,000. Similar ads have appeared in major cities across the country, he added.

Scientologists have continued in the spotlight by staging demonstrations in Portland during the weekend and on

Monday to protest the verdict. About 1,000 Scientologists attended a demonstration in downtown Portland Monday, when protesters heard from such followers as movie star John Travolta and musician Chick Corea in different events.

Carmichael said the advertising expenses "were not as much as the attorneys cost" in the unsuccessful defense of the fraud complaint filed by Julie Christofferson Titchbourne.

Garry P. McMurry, a Portland lawyer who represented Titchbourne, said, "I think the (public relations) campaign didn't have any purpose other than to put some money into the local economy."

At McMurry's request early in the trial, Londer also instructed the jurors not to look at Scientology advertisements.

"The jury didn't read them, and we knew the jury wasn't reading them," Carmichael said. "Obviously, the ads

were meant to continue telling people about Scientology and people who used Scientology."

McMurry said Londer instructed jurors to advise the court of any contacts with parties during the course of the trial. Two jurors during the first week said they were stopped on the downtown transit mall by people saying they were doing a public opinion poll about Scientology, the day after Scientology circulated a full-color, 18-page advertising section in Sunday editions of The Oregonian.

Londer ordered that such polling be stopped, and no other similar incident was reported.

Individual jurors on at least two occasions reported receiving threatening phone calls from callers professing to be Scientologists, but it was never determined where the calls came from or who made them.

Attorneys for the Scientologists asked Londer to declare a religious hol-

iday near the end of the trial to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the publication of a seminal Scientology book written by Hubbard called "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health." Londer declined.

In a publicity event that Carmichael said was "not purely coincidental" to the timing of the trial, Scientologists involved in an anti-drug program called Narconon staged a spectacle on April 28 in Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Several actors who perform stunts giving the appearance of danger in Hollywood movies performed for an audience.

Asked at a news conference Monday about her opinion of the Scientology advertising campaign, Titchbourne said, "I guess they've got the money to do it. They've got the freedom to say what they want, as long as it is true."

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