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Her time to speak has come

It is not so unusual to buy silence.
It's what you have to pay that is
sometimes unusual.
Sometimes, it is simply a threat of harm.
Sometimes, it is money.
And, sometimes, it is both.

In 1981, when Marjery Wakefield was working as a waitress in Madison, three people showed up at her apartment to dissuade her from filing a lawsuit against the Church of Scientology.



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They stayed for three days and gave her \$16,000, which she used to pay back her parents for the money she spent on Scientology counseling sessions. She was also forced to sign an agreement promising not to sue the church.

At the time, the church bought a lot for \$16,000. Wakefield was once a true believer, had traveled the country in pursuit of her religion, living alternately in slums and nice apartments, working for little and then a lot, always for the church.

She ended up mentally abused, she claimed, by her church, a controversial organization founded by the late science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.

Despite the payment, Wakefield returned in 1982 to Clearwater, Fla., the church's headquarters, and sued the Scientologists anyway. She claimed the church fraudulently promised to cure her mental illness and, instead, mentally abused her. She had paid them \$20,000 for counseling sessions.

A musician and computer programmer, she had been recruited to Scientology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1968 and worked as a waitress in Madison in the 1980s.

I have talked with Wakefield several times, most recently in 1986 when she settled her lawsuit for a reported \$200,000 and an agreement, once again, not to speak against the church.

Even then, she called the settlement a "hollow victory" because of the gag agreement.

"The real facts are that what Scientology presents on the outside, when you first get into it, is a long way from the really bizarre practices you end up with," she said in 1986.

"I really wanted the lawsuit to be brought through the legal system and (have the church) exposed, to have the system consider what was going on and make a decision on that," she said.

"OK, so I have my money back," she said then. "But they are still doing what they were doing. I think I could have done more to let other people know that this thing is a really big danger to mental health."

News came recently that Wakefield's silence has been broken again.

The Washington Post reported that Wakefield is being taken to court by the Scientologists, who want her to keep her mouth shut.

"I'm prepared to go to jail," she told the Orlando Sentinel.

"In fact, it may not be the worst thing. It would be an act that would get a lot of attention, and my purpose is to raise the awareness of people in this area about the church," she said.

Despite that gag order, Wakefield broke the agreement in 1987 (and, actually, in 1986 when she talked to me about her settlement) when she gave a television interview about cults. The church asked for a gag order, which the court granted last May.

Now, Scientology wants the court to find her guilty of 10 counts of criminal contempt and to punish her for each offense with six months in jail or a \$500 fine. They also want her to be held in contempt and fined \$240,000 for "damages against the church."

You can put it into a court order, you can threaten all you want. You might be able to guarantee silence for a short time.

Wakefield was silent for 12 years while she was in the church.

Now, she can't keep quiet.

She's paid for the right to talk about her years of silence.