

The Washington Post

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Church of Scientology Group Sues Post

■ An arm of the Church of Scientology has sued The Washington Post and two of its reporters in an attempt to prevent publication of copyrighted information that belongs to the church.

In an amendment to a suit filed against an Arlington man Aug. 11 in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, the Religious Technology Center asks that the newspaper return certain documents and refrain from publishing information that the church claims is confidential scriptures protected by federal laws.

The church originally sued Arlington resident Arnaldo Lerma, who allegedly disseminated anti-church information and church documents via the Internet. On Aug. 12, federal marshals seized computer equipment and files from Lerma's home, under an order from District Judge Leonie Brinkema. The revised suit seeks an injunction against The Post and reporters Richard Leiby and Marc Fisher, who allegedly obtained copyrighted information.

"The Post made a serious mistake in allowing themselves to be manipulated by a few maliciously motivated dissidents who want to use The Post to forward their religious hate campaign," said Earle C. Cooley, an attorney for the church.

Mary Ann Werner, an attorney for the newspaper, said the suit "is meritless. The documents at issue, which have been widely distributed over the Internet, were properly obtained by The Post from a public court file, a common and appropriate form of news-gathering. And the limited quotations included in The Post's story are well within the bounds of the 'fair use' doctrine under copyright law."

A hearing on the suit has been set for Friday.

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Scientology unit sues Washington Post

The Religious Technology Center (RTC) yesterday sued The Washington Post and two of its reporters, charging they have engaged in "extensive intentional copyright infringement and trade secrets misappropriation, targeting confidential Scientology scriptures."

RTC, which holds the intellectual property rights of Scientology, filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema will hold a hearing Friday on a temporary restraining order and RTC's impoundment application to retrieve its documents from the newspaper.

The new lawsuit is an amendment of an RTC suit against Arlington resident Arnaldo Lerma, who allegedly posted Scientology documents on the Internet. The new suit charges that The Post and its reporters — Richard Leiby and Marc Fisher — aided Mr. Lerma and illegally quoted Scientology materials in a report.