

TRENDING:

Weekend winter storm Kanye West's 'Free Puff' campaign Judge blocks DOGE Today's horoscope Asking Eric NYC's ICE enforcement policy

NEWS > CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Abuse victims hope healing begins with rabbi's arrest

By **NEW YORK DAILY NEWS** | NYDN@medianewsgroup.com

UPDATED: January 12, 2019 at 8:26 PM EST

For too long, an alleged Brooklyn pedophile rabbi's victims have waited for their silencing to end. Now, they hope his prosecution will push their closed community to out child molesters.

Twenty-three years after Rabbi Avrohom Mondrowitz fled to Jerusalem to evade charges of molesting four boys, Israel's ministry of justice now has an extradition request from Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes, his spokesman said.

"It's a shame it took so long. People committed suicide over him," said a 44-year-old man who says the popular rabbi abused him and his friends in the 1970s.

"If they did this a lot earlier, there would have been a lot more people saved because other child molesters would get the message. This will send the message."

In the hush-hush Orthodox Jewish community, victims say Mondrowitz left a trail of destroyed lives during his tenure as a rabbi/psychologist and headmaster in Brooklyn during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Former District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman tried to get him extradited in the 1980s, but a U.S. Justice Department official said the extradition treaty with Israel made it hard – until changes last January – to forward the request to Jerusalem.

Hynes, who took office in 1989, had been slammed for failing to go after Mondrowitz. Critics charged he feared losing the powerful Orthodox Jewish vote. But his spokesman denied the allegations, saying Hynes moved swiftly once a treaty change allowed Israel to recognize the 1985 sodomy counts.

An Israeli Justice official declined comment, as did Mondrowitz, contacted at his Jerusalem home.

One alleged victim was only 11 when he described Mondrowitz, who headed his alternative Jewish boys' school, as befriending him, giving him money and taking him to movies and his mountain cabin.

Soon, he began taking friends, he said.

"He used to talk us all up. He did a lot of things to entice kids," he said. "I used to bring kids to his house. He'd grab kids in front of me, in his office.

"It affected me a long time," he said. "I felt I was taken."

The victim, not named in the indictment, said he believed hundreds of boys were fondled by Mondrowitz, and saw dozens himself.

A 39-year-old rabbi filed a complaint last year, accusing Mondrowitz of abusing him when he was 11. He charged that pedophiles are still free to ruin lives in the closed Orthodox community, where leaders routinely silence victims to avoid scandal.

"There are probably more kids harmed in this community than any other because everything is placed under the rug," he said. "They throw a kid out of school if he complains. "This will send a message: You can run away and hide and you can think it is forgotten, but eventually it will hunt you down and get you. That is very important. It is a deterrent we never had."

nkatz@nydailynews.com

Originally Published: October 17, 2007 at 4:00 AM EDT