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## Breaking: Melzer Pleads Guilty in Teen Sex Case

The Jewish Week  
June 5, 2009

[http://www.thejewishweek.com/viewArticle/c37\\_a15987/News/National.html](http://www.thejewishweek.com/viewArticle/c37_a15987/News/National.html)

Adam Melzer, the 35-year-old former yeshiva basketball coach charged last summer with child endangerment, pled guilty in a court appearance in Hackensack, NJ on June 3.

A married father and member of the Orthodox community in Teaneck, Melzer was accused of persuading teenage boys whom he coached at a local day school to take naked pictures of themselves several years ago and give the photos to him.

Four youngsters in the community contacted the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and the Teaneck Police Department last summer, leading to Melzer's arrest. Officials believe that more than a dozen teens from the community took part in or knew of the photo requests, but have not come forward to avoid stigma and unwanted publicity.

Melzer maintained his innocence at the time of his arrest. But on Wednesday, according to Kenneth Ralph, assistant prosecutor in Bergen County, Melzer pled guilty to four counts of endangering the welfare of children. He will be evaluated as a sex offender before sentencing, scheduled for Aug. 28.

Depending on the outcome, Melzer could be sentenced to up to three years in prison or placed on supervised parole for life.

Sources close to the case say that Melzer made a pornographic video with an underage girl and two teenage boys from the community having consensual sex. In court, he admitting "obtaining and showing" a pornographic video to at least one minor, Ralph said.

Melzer is a member of Cong. Beth Abraham in Bergenfield, but after being snubbed there, according to sources, has been attending Cong. Bnai Jeshurun, another Orthodox synagogue, in nearby Teaneck.

Some community members are calling for local rabbis to put Melzer in cherem - a form of religious ostracism - that would not allow him to be a member of a synagogue or be called to the Torah.

Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger of Cong. Beth Abraham, to which Melzer belongs, said his initial response is that an admitted sex offender should not be given religious honors at synagogue services. He added that he plans to discuss with his rabbinic colleagues what approach should be taken in defining an "unwelcome" communal attitude toward Melzer. In addition, the rabbi said it is also important to send "a clear message" of respect to "the youngsters who came forward."

Benjamin Brafman, an attorney for Melzer, said he is "hopeful that Adam's community will ultimately extend the same compassion and understanding towards Adam that the prosecution and the Court already have."

Brafman said the disposition of the case, allowing for a suspended sentence, was "in the best interest of all parties."

He described Melzer as "a fundamentally decent young man" who "clearly has some personal issues to deal with," adding that "the appropriate remedy is treatment, not incarceration."

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