

# Taubenfeld Case Adjourned for Now

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Herschel Taubenfeld, charged with numerous counts of abuse against a minor

Herschel Taubenfeld, a New Square man charged with 30 misdemeanor counts of molestations against a male youth in his village, appeared for a hearing before Judge Salas of New Square Village Court on November 19.

Originally a plea deal was expected but the matter was adjourned.

Taubenfeld, charged last December with 10 counts of forcible touching; 10 counts of sex abuse in the third degree; and 10 counts of endangering the welfare of a child, was told to appear back in court in January 2013, pending further information on his "probation report."

Sources close to the case gave the following statement:

"The Ramapo Police Department should be highly commended for their work on the Taubenfeld case. Their vigilance, as well as continuous and intensive community cooperation, is necessary for ensuring the safety of all of our children from the worst sorts of perpetrators."

In the Taubenfeld case, advocates such as Brooklyn rabbi Nuchem Rosenberg are concerned that a weak sentence will send the wrong message that molesters can get away with their misdeeds with a relative slap on the wrist. That could discourage future victims from coming forward.

Rosenberg is a leader in the effort to raise awareness and fight sexual abuse in Hasidic and Orthodox communities. The topic has been receiving more attention in recent months and years, following many high profile cases.

Rockland County prosecutors have said it is challenging to pursue sex abuse cases within Rockland's religious communities, as typically social pressure encourages such matters to be dealt with internally.

In a recent case against Monsey resident Schmuell Dym, Rockland County District Attorney Thomas Zugibe told The Journal News that social pressure created hurdles to justice. He said, ultimately the victims did not wish to testify in the case due to the pressure, thus weakening the DA Office's position and leading to Dym receiving only probation.

However, some activists contest this characterization of the Dym case and others.

Shmarya Rosenberg, editor of the watchdog website www.failedmessiah.com, said, "If the DA protected the victims and their families and worked closely with them, more would choose to testify. But he doesn't really do that, and then he offers Dym and other like him plea deals that are really disgraceful, but which many haredi rabbis love. And it is those rabbis who often control large blocs of votes. That's the real story with most of these cases."

The issue of sex abuse has received attention around the country. Rav Moshe Soloveichik of Chicago, Illinois is a prominent authority who has been working to raise awareness of abuse. He offered a statement on the topic in light of the charges against Taubenfeld.

"While I am not familiar with the details of this particular case in New Square, being a resident of Chicago myself, a few basic principles need to be emphasized. Child-molesters should be reported to the police and brought to justice, primarily as a preventative and protective measure...To grasp the enormity of the obligation incumbent on us to root out child-molestation, we need to focus on its horrific effects on children. Perhaps one of the most devastating effects of child molestation is the repetition of the cycle of abuse. In some cases, victims who do not receive the help they need, in turn, may eventually victimize others in a similar manner. This results in a child molestation crisis of epidemic proportions – as we have today."

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