

Prosecutors Revive Sex Charges Against Brooklyn Chasidic Rabbi

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LOS ANGELES (Oct. 8)

Federal prosecutors have revived charges against a Brooklyn Chasidic rabbi accused of fondling a teen-age girl on an international flight last year.

The original complaint against Rabbi Israel Grunwald of “knowingly engaging in a sexual contact with a 15-year-old female,” stemmed from charges by the girl that she had been groped and fondled by Grunwald and by his assistant Yehudah Friedlander in May 1995.

Friedlander subsequently pleaded guilty and is serving a 22- month sentence in federal prison.

However, the charges against Grunwald were dropped by Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra Yang, though she reserved the right to reopen the case.

Yang now said she had continued the investigation and felt that the time was appropriate to proceed against Grunwald, who will be arraigned Oct. 15 before a U.S. magistrate judge.

Rex Beaber, Grunwald’s attorney, said his client continues to proclaim his innocence.

Grunwald leads a faction of some 100 Pupa Chasidim in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn. He is the son of the late Josef Grunwald, the Hungarian-born founder and grand rabbi of the 12,000-member Pupa movement.

On the founder’s death, the title devolved on his older son, Yakov Grunwald, who heads the main Pupa community in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn.

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