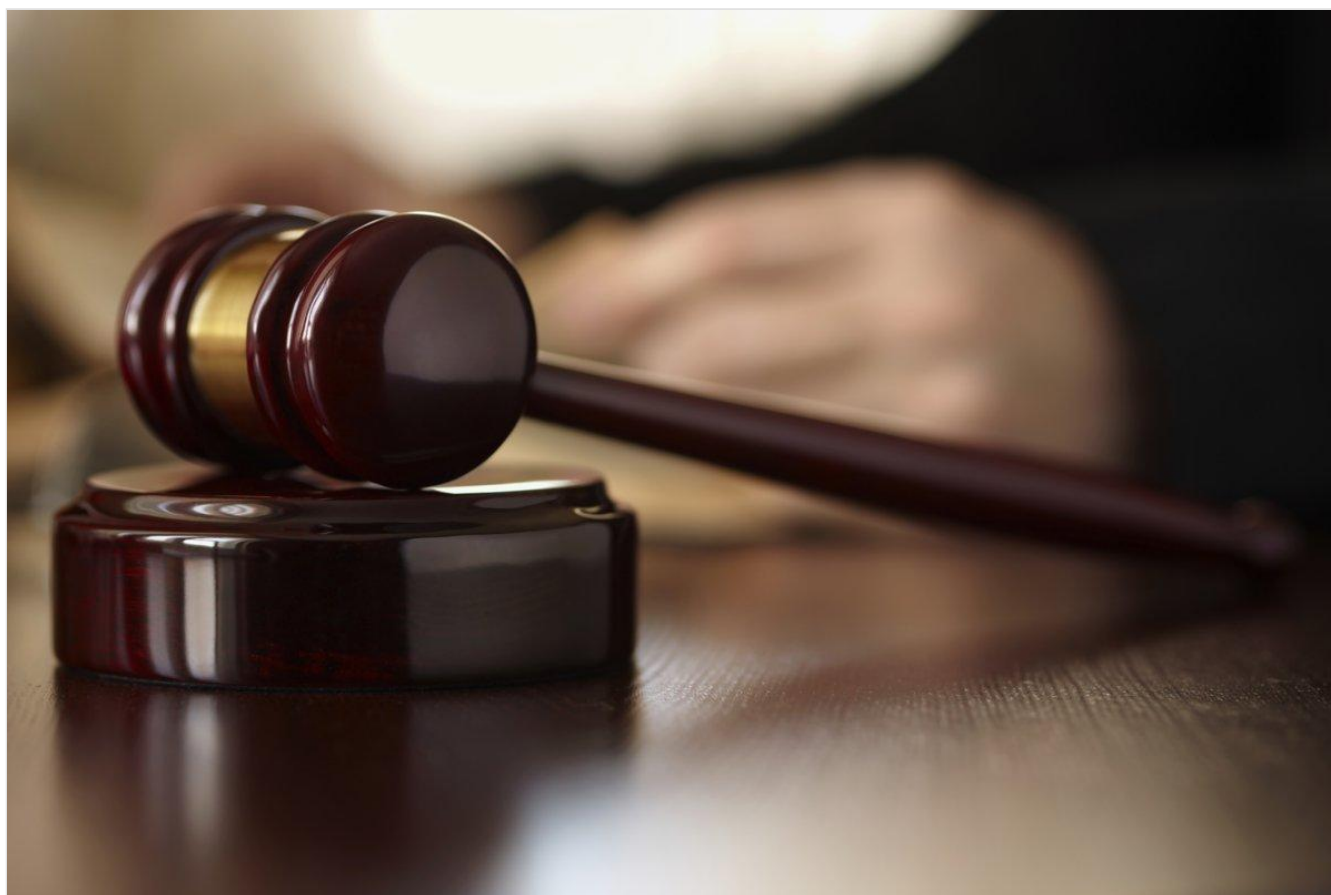

Brooklyn man fled to Israel to avoid child sex abuse charges

BY CHRISTINA CARREGA REUVEN BLAU

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Avrohom Margolis flew to Israel after he was busted for repeatedly having sex with a child relative in Brooklyn. (GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO)

A Brooklyn man charged with repeatedly having sex with a child relative fled to Israel after plea talks fell apart following more than two years of negotiations, authorities said in court.

Avrohom Margolis was initially arrested and charged on Oct. 14, 2014, with a felony offense of having sex at least two times with a child, court records show.

He was released on \$5,000 bail and ordered to hand over his passport, according to Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office.

The truck driver then spent more than two years desperately trying to convince the district attorney to reduce the felony charge, sources said. But those talks fell apart, sources said, and the case was dismissed due to an apparent technicality.

Margolis, an Israeli citizen who has been living in New York for years with a green card, got his passport back. But the DA's office brought the same case before a grand jury, which indicted him earlier this month, records show. Before that process was complete, Margolis flew to Israel on Dec. 11 for a family celebration. During that trip, his wife filed for divorce, according to his lawyer, Stacey Richman. As a result, the Jewish religious court has ordered him to remain in the country while that process plays out, Richman says. "He wants to come back," she said. "His family lives here. He had a return ticket." That's not what the DA's office believes. "This defendant fled the country to avoid prosecution," Assistant District Attorney Jeanne Robitaille said in a Feb. 2 court hearing. "The defendant was present and remained in the country up until the point that the plea negotiations broke off." It is unclear why the case was briefly dropped. At the court hearing earlier this month, Justice Elizabeth Foley issued a bench warrant for Margolis' arrest. As a result, Gonzalez's office has begun the process of moving to extradite him, said spokesman Oren Yaniv. Israel in recent years has amended its extradition law to allow people such as Margolis to be shipped back to America, according to legal experts in the field. Previously, people who were charged with sexually assaulting children would not be extradited.

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