



## Lawsuit accuses Connecticut rabbi of sexual abuse

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[http://www.bostonherald.com/news/national/2016/05/lawsuit\\_accuses\\_connecticut\\_rabbi\\_of\\_sexual\\_abuse](http://www.bostonherald.com/news/national/2016/05/lawsuit_accuses_connecticut_rabbi_of_sexual_abuse)

HARTFORD, Conn. — A Connecticut rabbi is accused of raping and molesting a teenage boy hundreds of times when the boy was a student at a Jewish boarding school in New Haven from 2001 to 2005, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal court.

The former student, Eliyahu Mirlis, now 28, of New Jersey, accuses Rabbi Daniel Greer, principal of the Yeshiva of New Haven school, of sexual abuse. The Associated Press generally does not name people who allege sexual assault, but Mirlis wanted to come forward, said his lawyer, Antonio Ponvert.

Greer did not return messages seeking comment Monday and Tuesday. His lawyer, William Ward, said the rabbi denies the allegations and is now forced to prove they are false. Ward asked the public to demand evidence before rushing to judgment.

The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages. It also names as defendants Yeshiva of New Haven, which is an all-boys high school, and The Gan School, an elementary school for boys and girls that Greer also leads. The lawsuit accuses the schools of allowing the sexual abuse to continue for years.

The lawsuit also alleges Greer, now 75, sexually abused at least one other boy at the school.

Ponvert says Mirlis hasn't sought criminal charges but would cooperate in any ensuing criminal probe.

The region's top prosecutor, New Haven State's Attorney Michael Dearington, declined to comment on the allegations Tuesday. Officer David Hartman, a spokesman for New Haven police, said police officials plan to speak with Ponvert, but they can't investigate unless Mirlis files a criminal complaint.

"Rabbi Greer was in his sixties when he forced the minor Eli to engage in acts of sex with him, including forced fellatio, anal sex, fondling and masturbation," the lawsuit says. "Rabbi Greer frequently gave Eli alcohol at the time he raped and assaulted his child victim. Rabbi Greer showed Eli pornographic films."

The lawsuit also says that Greer sexually assaulted Mirlis on school property, in the bedroom of Greer's home, at motels in Branford, Connecticut, and in Paoli and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, on land in Hamden, Connecticut, and at rental properties in New Haven owned and managed by Yeshiva of New Haven and The Gan School.

"Greer has never been criminally punished. He has never taken responsibility," Ponvert said. "This lawsuit will force him to answer for his crimes."

Greer's lawyer questioned why Mirlis was coming forward with the allegations now.

"Ask yourself why the plaintiff would wait 14 years," Ward said. "Ask yourself why Mr. Mirlis, well into his adulthood, repeatedly honored the man he now accuses. Ask yourself why Mr. Mirlis, an Orthodox Jew, would not seek redress from a rabbinical arbitration court. Ask yourself why Mr. Mirlis' first stop was his lawyer's office to seek money."

Ward added, "It only takes a moment to make allegations with despicable indifference to the consequences to the damage they would cause to my client and his family and his reputation that he spent a lifetime building in his community. This is a difficult time for my client and his family."

Greer is a graduate of Princeton and Yale Law School who has testified before the state legislature several times on a variety of issues, including opposing same-sex unions in 2002 before the state approved same-sex marriage. He also is a former member of the New Haven police commissioners' board and a past chairman of the New Haven Redevelopment Agency.

He also led efforts to improve New Haven's Edgewood neighborhood.

Greer's daughter was among a group of Orthodox Jewish students who sued Yale University in the late 1990s, claiming the school's requirement that they live in coed dorms violated their constitutional rights. A federal judge disagreed and dismissed the lawsuit.