



May 4, 2016

Rabbi Accused Of Assault

**Man Says In Lawsuit He Was Repeatedly Abused
As A Teen**



By CHRISTINE DEMPSEY

BRIDGEPORT — In a federal lawsuit filed Tuesday, a New Jersey man accuses a prominent rabbi from New Haven of repeatedly sexually assaulting him when he was a teenager.

The target of the allegation is Rabbi Daniel Greer, a well-known member of the Orthodox Jewish community in New Haven and a former member of the city's board of police commissioners and governor's commission on school choice. The suit was filed electronically in U.S. District Court in Bridgeport Tuesday morning, a court clerk said.

The suit names as co-defendants two schools run by the rabbi, Yeshiva of New Haven and The Gan School. It accuses the schools of “allowing the violent sexual abuse to continue unabated for years.”

It alleges that Greer sexually abused another male student as well.

According to a copy of the lawsuit, the plaintiff was sexually abused over three years, starting when he was 15. The copy was provided by attorney Antonio Ponvert III of Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder.

During this time, the plaintiff was forced to engage in sexual acts and he was frequently given alcohol by Greer, the lawsuit said. It also said Greer showed the plaintiff pornographic films.

The plaintiff alleges the assault and abuse happened on school property, at Greer's home and in motels in Connecticut and Pennsylvania, according to the lawsuit.

The name of the plaintiff is on the lawsuit. The Courant has a policy of not naming victims of alleged sexual assaults.

The rabbi never was arrested but could be charged criminally, Ponvert said. The plaintiff didn't go to the police previously.

“At the time that it was happening, he did not report it to police because he didn't understand that what was happening to him was sexual assault and was a crime,” Ponvert said.

After the lawsuit was reported, the New Haven Police Department said officials were reaching out to the plaintiff's attorney.

Ponvert declined to state a money figure for the amount of damages being sought, but said, “if the award from the jury in this case is commensurate with the harm that was inflicted, it will be a very large amount of money.”

William Ward, Greer's attorney, said he hadn't seen the lawsuit and couldn't address the specific allegations. But he questioned the plaintiff's motives and the delay in bringing forward his allegations.

“It only takes a moment to make allegations with despicable indifference to the consequences of the damage they would cause to my client, to his family and to his reputation that he spent a lifetime building in this community. This is a difficult time for my client and his family, but I would remind the public to ask for evidence before rushing to judgment.”

“Ask yourself why [the plaintiff] would wait 14 years. Ask yourself why [the plaintiff] well into his adulthood, repeatedly honored the man he accuses.” He has repeatedly said the rabbi helped him personally in several ways, Ward said.

“Ask yourself why [the plaintiff], himself an Orthodox Jew, would not seek redress in the form of a rabbinical arbitration court. Finally, ask yourself why [the plaintiff's] first stop was his lawyer's office to seek money.”

Greer founded The Gan School and Yeshiva of New Haven — where he remains principal.

An outspoken man, he is known for his strong comments against gay marriage, immorality and crime. In addition to the New Haven Board of Police Commissioners, he was a member of the Governor's Commission on School Choice.

Greer got national attention in 2007 when crime in his New Haven neighborhood prompted him to organize armed citizen patrols of the streets.

David Clohessy, president of SNAP, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, said, “It takes great courage to do what [the plaintiff] is doing and we praise him for protecting others and exposing a credibly accused child molester. Regardless of the legal outcome, we hope [he] feels some comfort and relief by taking action against an alleged predator.”