

## **New York, Brooklyn - 12/13/2011**

### **Haredi sex abuse scandal revealed in NY**

It happened for a very long time: **Eighty-five men** from **Brooklyn's ultra-Orthodox community** are suspected of sexually abusing more than 100 of the community's children and teenagers.

Many, including the victims' parents, allegedly knew about it but chose to keep silent – until one of the community organizations decided to reveal the horrible secret and went to the police.

The affair was reported by the New York Post on Sunday. The New York police are still unsure when the abuse began, but it clearly stretched over several years. Several years of suffering, trauma and perhaps the worst thing of all – a conspiracy of silence aimed at preventing humiliation and shame, all at the expense of the helpless children

An initiative called Kol Tzedek (“voice of justice”) decided to expose the dreadful acts, and as the months went by more and more men were arrested. The organization members located children who fell victim to the abuse and convinced them to complain. The case involves 117 victims – 89 of whom are under the age of 17. The number of arrests is expected to increase as the affair unfolds.

So far, 38 indictments have been filed and 14 of the detainees have already been sent to jail for up to 20 years for rape, sodomy and kidnapping. Another 24 suspects have been released on bail, and the rest are still being questioned.

According to the investigation, in some of the cases parents knew their children were being molested but gave in to community pressure and chose to remain silent.

'Victims were troubled kids'

One of the suspects is Andrew Goodman, 27, who worked for Jewish social-service agencies and looks like a movie star. According to the New York Post, many members of Brooklyn's Jewish community believe he is a monster.

Goodman was already arrested in 2010, but was released on bail. The price of his freedom appears to have been heavy: Since returning home, he hosted dozens of children and allegedly abused them during parties with liquor and child porn. Some of the kids were photographed by neighbors entering and leaving the apartment.

So far, authorities have charged him with sexually abusing two Orthodox boys for years in Flatbush — one from age 11 to 15, the other from age 13 to 16.

According to the 144-count indictment, which alleges numerous violations since 2006, Goodman filmed sex acts with the youngsters on a Web cam. Court papers and source say he also “threatened the life” of a boy who reported him to authorities.

**Andrew Goodman is known in our community as a lifelong molester who preys on young boys and ruins their lives,”** a Talmudic scholar at Congregation Bais Torah wrote to Brooklyn Judge Martin Murphy, who is hearing the case, the New York Post reported.

Rabbi Shea Hecht, of the Hasidic Lubavitch group, accused Goodman on a Jewish radio show of "hunting" for prey. He said Goodman went to yeshiva playgrounds, once offering a reward for any boy who found his “lost glasses”. Goodman also pressured boys to recruit others, the rabbi said.

Goodman is currently in detention and has pleaded not guilty. “These were not forceful — no one was held against their will,” his lawyer said, adding that the alleged victims were “troubled kids who did not have a good home life.” He claimed that one boy ran away and Goodman “gave him a safe haven.”