

## Learning Our Lesson

As a lawyer representing many alleged victims of Avrohom Mondrowitz, and a sociologist who has raised awareness about this case for 20 years, we commend you for your editorial on this indicted child abuser's recent arrest in Israel after evading justice for over two decades (Justice Delayed – and Possibly Denied, Nov. 23). As you say, the case proves the need for a “more honest approach to the very real problem of pedophilia and abuse in the Orthodox community,” including “unhesitating resort to secular law-enforcement authorities.”

You are also correct in deploring the fact that Mondrowitz “was indicted in 1984 only in connection with the charges made by the parents of non-Jewish children.”

But to blame the Jewish victims' parents for their “apparent disinclination to come forward” is not really fair. Those parents did not act of their own accord. Our extensive information indicates that there were rabbis who were aware of at least dozens of Orthodox Jewish Mondrowitz victims when the official charges were being assembled. Rather than helping the victims' families to seek justice against the man whose alleged crimes had so devastated a community, these rabbis either took no action or actively discouraged the families from taking part in the law enforcement process against Mondrowitz. When he fled to Israel, they again counseled silence, leaving the victims and their advocates to pursue the case without any support from their spiritual leaders.

If we are to learn from the Mondrowitz case, we must learn a different rabbinic approach to child sexual abuse. Otherwise, we will share the responsibility for the victimization of children whose need for justice is thwarted by the rabbis they trust.

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