

## The Zalkin Law Firm Files Third in a Series of Sexual Abuse Civil Lawsuits Filed against Jehovah's Witnesses Congregations and National Jehovah's Witnesses Organization

Alleged Childhood Sexual Abuse Occurred at New Mexico Congregation

Albuquerque, NM (PRWEB) August 29, 2013



A third in a series of civil lawsuits against Jehovah's Witnesses congregations around the country has now been filed against a congregation in New Mexico by The Zalkin Law Firm and The Revo/Smith Law Firm. This new lawsuit (case number D-1314-CV-2013-00948) was filed in the Thirteenth Judicial District Court, County of Valencia, New Mexico, on behalf of a former child member of the Los Lunas Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, located in Los Lunas, NM. The plaintiff, Monica Lynn Jaramillo, was a minor child whose family was active in the congregation at the time of the alleged abuse.

“This lawsuit highlights a disturbing trend of victims coming forward to tell their stories about alleged sexual abuse within Jehovah's Witnesses congregations,” said Irwin Zalkin,

Two other similar lawsuits have been recently filed by the Zalkin Law Firm in San Diego and in Ohio. (See Lopez v. Defendant Doe 1, San Diego Superior Court #37-2012-00099849-CU-PO-CTL and Case no. 13CV181056 Lorain County Common Pleas Court). Each case alleges sexual abuse of a minor child within a Jehovah's Witnesses congregation.

According to the New Mexico civil complaint, it is alleged that Ms. Jaramillo was sexually abused as a child by Michael Brunner, who had served as a “Ministerial Servant” and an “Elder”, which are leadership positions in the congregation. Ms. Jaramillo is now 35 years old and the alleged abuse occurred when she was 8 years old in 1988 at the home of the dependent Brunner.

According to the complaint, Ms. Jaramillo at the time of the alleged molestation was entrusted to Defendant Brunner's care at the instruction of the Elders of the Los Lunas Congregation. The complaint alleges that The Elders were knowledgeable and aware of Defendant Brunner's history of previous alleged rapes of congregational members, including the alleged rape of the mother of Ms. Jaramillo at a congregation in Indiana when she was eight years old.

The complaint outlines how Ms. Jaramillo's mother informed congregation Elders of her alleged rape and other alleged rapes and that the Elders took no action to remove Defendant Brunner from the congregation or organization. According to the mother, she was told by Elders that for her to be granted the “Pioneer” position within the congregation that she would need to show her “forgiveness” of Defendant Brunner by allowing him to visit her home, prepare dinner for him and to have her children spend over nights under his supervision at his home. Under duress, the mother followed these directives, which allowed the defendant access to commit the alleged sexual abuse.

“This lawsuit highlights a disturbing trend of victims coming forward to tell their stories about alleged sexual abuse within Jehovah's Witnesses congregations,” said Irwin Zalkin, of The Zalkin Law Firm. “The allegations by this victim and the victims of other cases show that there could possibly be alarming tolerance for abusers of children within the Jehovah's Witnesses religion.”

The complaint alleges that the defendants named in the case, the Las Lunas Congregation, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., Defendant Brunner and un-named other defendants were all negligent in their legal duty to protect the minor child in their care and failed in their duty to prevent the alleged perpetrator, Brunner, from sexually molesting children. The complaint also alleges that the defendants owed a duty to investigate, not employ the perpetrator and failed to conduct a reasonable investigation of the alleged abuse. By doing so, the Elders and the Jehovah's Witnesses organization failed to follow their own policies and procedures. The complaint also alleges that there may have been a failure to report these allegations to the proper state or police authorities.

As a result of the alleged abuse, the complaint states that Ms. Jaramillo has suffered great pain and emotional distress that prevented her from the normal enjoyment of life requiring medical and psychological treatment and also that she suffered the loss of earnings and earning capacity.

The Zalkin Law Firm is associating in this case with attorney Terrance Revo of the Albuquerque Revo/Smith Law Firm. The complaint asks for compensatory and punitive damages and costs.

[About The Zalkin Law Firm](#)

### Contact

**Irwin Zalkin**  
 The Zalkin Law Firm  
 858-259-3011  
[Email](#)

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### Attachments



With offices in San Diego and New York, The Zalkin Law Firm (<http://www.zalkin.com>) is one of the premier sexual abuse and personal injury law firms in the country. The firm's lawyers have represented hundreds of survivors of childhood sexual abuse and achieved groundbreaking results in numerous high-profile clergy abuse cases across the United States.

The Zalkin Law Firm has aggressively represented hundreds of survivors of child sexual abuse, including former Boy Scouts. The firm has negotiated over \$200 million in settlements in sex abuse cases.

About The Revo Smith Law Firm

With offices in Albuquerque, NM, The Revo Smith Law Firm ( <http://www.revosmithlaw.com> ) provides a full range of personal injury representation. Mr. Revo has practiced law for more than 37 years and is dedicated to providing excellent legal counsel with professionalism and compassion. Mr. Revo has successfully acquired tens of millions of dollars in personal injury and medical malpractice settlement and awards and represented thousands of clients.

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