

# [San Diego Reader](#)



- Complaints of molestations to leaders of Jehovah’s Kingdom Hall in Linda Vista accomplished nothing, according to court documents.
- Image by [Matthew Suárez](#)
- [City Lights](#)

## Judge orders Jehovah’s Witnesses to release molestation files

1 0

### Eighteen years of horror in Linda Vista

By [Dorian Hargrove](#), [Aug. 30, 2017](#)

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The mission of Jehovah's Witnesses is to spread belief in the Bible in hopes of rescuing folks before the world ends.

Jehovah's Witnesses' attorneys seem to have another mission: do anything to keep internal documents revealing the names of alleged child molesters, and the congregations they attended, from seeing the light of day.



“I can't explain what their logic is or their legal strategy,” says attorney Irwin Zalkin.

Image by Matthew Suárez

The second directive is unfolding in two San Diego courtrooms. Attorneys for José Lopez and Osbaldo Padron — both alleged victims of molestation by an elder from the Linda Vista congregation named Gonzalo Campos — say Jehovah's Witnesses' governing body, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, refuses to turn over documents. This is despite the fact that two San Diego County Superior Court judges [have imposed millions](#) of dollars in sanctions for similar conduct.

In a June 17, 2017, email, Lopez's attorney Devin Storey accuses the Watchtower of withholding documents that his client needs to “establish Watchtower's practice of protecting molesters from prosecution.”

The struggle for documents is not isolated to San Diego courtrooms but is playing out in several countries. Watchtower's policies of requiring more than one eyewitness to the abuse before launching an investigation; of forcing the abused, often young children, to confront their abuser; and of prohibiting members from contacting law enforcement with complaints of sexual abuse have created what one former member and outspoken critic of the Watchtower Tract Society, William Bowen, calls a “pedophile's paradise.”

Last year, a Royal Commission in Australia found that Jehovah's Witnesses had hidden more than a thousand reports of child abuse from that country's law enforcement. In the United States, during the past five years, the Watchtower has paid out numerous settlements to people who claimed they'd suffered child abuse at the hands of church elders. To date, seven San Diego residents have sued the Watchtower Tract Society regarding sexual abuse of minors.

## Watchtower resistance

In 2015, Superior Court judge Joan Lewis awarded Lopez \$13.5 million after Watchtower repeatedly failed to turn over documents and provide access to witnesses. The Watchtower appealed the decision. A state appellate court ruled that the judge did not give the Watchtower enough opportunity to turn over the documents. Appellate court judges remanded the case back to the trial court, providing the church another chance to turn over the requested documents.

In a separate case, but one following a similar pattern, San Diego Superior Court judge Richard Strauss [imposed a \\$4000-per-day penalty](#) against the Watchtower for failing to turn over documents in a case filed by Padron, another one of Campos's alleged victims. Watchtower's attorneys, as they did in the Lopez case, filed an appeal.

Attorney Storey from the Zalkin Law Firm, says the Watchtower is back to its old tricks in the Lopez case, once again producing heavily redacted documents and failing to produce others despite orders from a court-appointed mediator. Meanwhile, Storey and lead attorney Irwin Zalkin are preparing for yet another appellate court hearing wherein the Watchtower hopes to nullify the \$4000-a-day fine given in the Padron case.

## Fled to Mexico

Gonzalo Campos, 54, became a Jehovah's Witness in 1979 after moving to San Diego from Mexico. He was baptized in 1980 while attending the congregation in Linda Vista. Six months following his baptism, church elders promoted Campos to "publisher," a member who visits homes with hopes of spreading church doctrine, also the first step in becoming an elder.

But according to accusations against him, Campos and his mother were staying at a member family's home in 1982. Campos shared a bedroom with a young boy. In the middle of the night, the boy felt somebody pulling down his pajama pants and felt wetness on his buttocks. He opened his eyes and Campos was kneeling next to his bed. The boy punched Campos and then grabbed a baseball bat. The boy's mother kicked Campos and his mother out of her house. Days later she lodged a complaint with church elders Justino Diaz and Carlos Ramirez at the Linda Vista congregation. The elders did not punish Campos. Instead he remained a publisher and was allowed to teach Bible classes to children.

It was not the last time Campos is alleged to have sexually assaulted a child and received protection from church elders. Eight now claim that Campos molested them. The alleged molestations happened between 1982 and 1999. Elders have been accused of refusing to report the molestation to law enforcement.

During those nearly two decades, Campos is said to have meticulously groomed his victims and their parents. Accusers say he convinced parents to let their children accompany him on gardening jobs, ostensibly as a chance for the children to learn hard work and receive instruction on church dogma.

Once at the job site, accusers say, Campos would often let the kids swim in his clients' pools. Once the work was done and the kids finished swimming, Campos would force the kids into the shower. While showering Campos would touch them and eventually sodomize them.

In exchange for their silence, several witnesses have testified, Campos would buy them Hershey's chocolate bars, McDonald's Happy Meals, and toys such as Transformers and Matchbox cars. In one case, the alleged victim says Campos repeatedly assaulted him over a five-year span and paid him money to keep quiet.

All the while, church leaders at the Linda Vista congregation continued to promote Campos, eventually to the position of elder, a person responsible for arranging and speaking at meetings.

By 1993, parents began to discover what had happened to their children. One mother found out after finding a note her teenage son had written to a girlfriend. She contacted the elders at the Linda Vista congregation to report Campos.

Days later, elder Roberto Rivera called the mother back. "But he say something to the fact that [Campos] was an elder now and not to do anything," testified the woman during a December 2013 deposition. "That if I will speak or keep moving things around to find out stuff, that they will say something that I did in the past."

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**Mike Murphy** · Lakeside, California

seems they were given years to delete/fabricate files

Like · Reply · 4 · Aug 30, 2017 7:35am



**Vaughan Johnson** · Dunbar, East Lothian, United Kingdom

But isn't it incredible that they have kept documents since then, when the law was very different, and other organisations never even bothered

Like · Reply · 1 · Aug 30, 2017 9:08am



**Mike Murphy** · Lakeside, California

that might be the fabricating part

Like · Reply · 1 · Aug 30, 2017 1:37pm



**Stacey Sasaki** · Taking care of my family at Retired

This is but a TIP of the iceberg in this cult. Their shunning policies for those who have left the cult are horrific. Many stay in the cult just so they can continue to speak to their loved ones.

Like · Reply · 19 · Aug 30, 2017 9:37am



**Erin David Rae Llana-Camagay** · Clinical Nurse Specialist in Palliative Medicine (MacMillan Band 7) at London North West Healthcare NHS Trust

I might not have been unlucky enough to be physically molested in my local congregation in London but the emotional abuse I received was extortionate! I left just right before I got totally damaged. It's sad my parents still struggle to accept my decision and now all the people I know since childhood, including relatives, treat me like a dirt. Very sad! Perhaps the worst decision I regret I have made was to commit to the cult when I was a young teenager who is unable to sustain my self as I now felt I

Like · Reply · 9 · Aug 30, 2017 12:23pm

**Stacey Sasaki** · Taking care of my family at Retired

Erin David Rae Llena-Camagay thank you for sharing your story-- I am so sorry. You deserve NOT to be treated like dirt! You made a decision, and family is family. Should be, anyway.

Like · Reply · 3 · Aug 30, 2017 3:00pm

**Trudie TulinPeri Akin** · Adana, Turkey

Erin David Rae Llena-Camagay - I'm so sorry for your pain. Your story sounds similar to my big sister. When I saw her struggles, I could see something so unfair happening. At 18 she came out as gay. She's 54 now and my mother hasn't spoken to her in all that time. On the rare occasions that I've seen my mother, when I've spoken of my sister, my mother covers her ears and shouts " It's an abomination!!". I have nothing but contempt for the JW's for what they did to my family.

Like · Reply · 1 · 2 hrs

**Isaac Lazarus L Sam** · Vimanapura High School

Put them in jail no judgment

Like · Reply · 3 · Aug 30, 2017 9:40am

**Trudie TulinPeri Akin** · Adana, Turkey

My mother is a JW and refuses to acknowledge that there were paedophiles in her congregation. I personally knew someone who was molested by a member of the congregation. When she told her father, who was an elder, he became cold towards her. It turned out later, I read in our local newspaper that he was imprisoned for some similar crimes. I believe it is rife amongst the JW's. I would love for the poor brainwashed fools to see what the truth really is and set them free.

Like · Reply · 10 · Aug 30, 2017 10:35am

**Chris Lee**

Yes, IMO, all religions are cults...brainwashing, using only one book for one's philosophy/ viewpoint....bye bye to critical thinking. Freedom from religions is the only way to evolve in our society.

Like · Reply · 9 · Aug 30, 2017 3:14pm

**Robin Kish-miller** · Volunteer at Palo Alto Humane Society

Trudie TulinPeri Akin - Most refuse to acknowledge anything like this. Its wide spread too - world wide: Spain, South America, Turkey, Norway, Canada, Austrailia, Africa...etc. Very disturbing. Each country has issues. Btw, my Pops s passed away several years ago. He was Turkish and Hungarian. Take care!

Like · Reply · 2 · Aug 30, 2017 4:18pm · Edited

**Trudie TulinPeri Akin** · Adana, Turkey

Chris Lee - I believe religions only serve one purpose and that is to control people and make them compliant. That's why so many religions refer to good followers as sheep. You don't need to think for yourself, you just blindly follow. Many newly recruited JW's are people who have been through the grinder and want to switch off and let someone else take charge for a while. This is normally just a passing phase that many of us go through but manage to get through it. But when a religion starts

taking an interest and taking charge they get sucked I forever at it becomes the be all and end all of everything. That leaves open targets for abuse.

Like · Reply · 3 · Aug 31, 2017 12:25am

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### Tyson Sharon

About 15 years before my sister-in-law died from not accepting a blood transfusion, she came out and admitted that an Elder in Ohio had molested her when she was young. That started a domino effect, and the several of her other siblings then came out as well and said that he had molested them as well. This Elder studied with their family and had easy access to the children. The Elder died a long time ago, but the fact still remains that it happened and he got away with it. I wonder if there were other children that he molested as well? Shame on The Watchtower!

Like · Reply · 3 · Aug 30, 2017 8:34pm



### Kimberly De La Cruz-Steinhauser · Travel nursing at Pricore Staffing Solutions

Terrible I have a friend shunned from being pregnant having a baby she's not been able to speak with her mother father or other family member shunned from her families sad broke my heart I remember pioneering with her and didn't like knocking on doors to hand out the watch tower my family was in that temple as well glad my mothers insane methods of finding a man ended and we left I thank god for that those people are messed up trust me they are to touchy freely on the young girls just creepy creeps never happier to leave a place where men liked to touch little. Girls

Like · Reply · 3 · Aug 30, 2017 9:31pm



### James Jury

jehovahs witnesses shun women for having babies and worship in temples and hate going out knocking on doors and do it to pass out watchtowers? And People that come in, suddenly become touchy "freely"? Wow. I never knew that! Thanks. I'll tell others.

Like · Reply · 8 hrs



### William Lance Huget · Paramedic at Guess?

WT is more interested in loyalty to the Org and protecting its reputation at all costs rather than doing the right thing. It ruins lives and is not biblical Christianity, but a high control group.

Like · Reply · 5 · Aug 31, 2017 12:06am



### Vince Tylor

Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) predicted the end of the world, IN WRITING, numerous times. Not once did they come true. They truly are known for their 'False Predictions' the world over.

JWs are taught that they alone are TRUE Christians and that all other people not JW will soon be destroyed. This is no exaggeration.

JWs will allow their own children TO DIE rather than accept a life saving blood transfusion even in severe medical emergencies. It has already happened THOUSANDS of times!

Just like this mother died unnecessarily!

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/england/shropshire/7078455.stm>

Now her hu... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 4 · 11 hrs



**James Jury**

wait, jw's predicted the end of the world, but you say "not once did it come true?"are you sure? not once? What about a couple of times? did the world end a couple of times?

Jws think they are true christians and everyone else are not? Wow thats terrible. I mean obviously the opposite is true, Everyone else are TRUE Christians and the Jws wont be destroyed because no one should be predicting the end of the world, right?

JWs will allow their own children to die than to accept life saving blood transfusions? Even in sever medical emergencies? And its already has happened THOUSANDS of times? ... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 1 · 7 hrs



**Stephen McClounan** · Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

As a Justice of the Peace I cannot understand why individuals or their families (if the victim is a minor) do not exercise their own legal rights. Why is reporting an assault solely the responsibility of an organisation? Organisations, religious or otherwise, do not know all the facts and must consider the victim's right to privacy. Organisations are not eyewitnesses.

Every legitimate victim has the right to press criminal charges. Victims should be supported and empowered to do so. Perpetrators must never be protected. Relying on an organisation to do this is an abdication of personal (or fa... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 2 · 8 hrs



**Christopher Snittle** · Nólsoy, Faroe Islands

Bill Smith, lead singer for Gork committed suicide yesterday

Trixie Winkle, the soap opera actress was arrested for shoplifting yesterday.

Alan Gribble, a Jehovah's Witness from Alanta, hit a bicyclist while talking n his cell phone yesterday.

Hmm



[sandiegoreaderjwscandals Aug. 30, 2017 @ 12:06 p.m.](#)

Something needs to be done. Quick.

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### [Dorian Hargrove Aug. 30, 2017 @ 12:39 p.m.](#)

SDReaderJWScandals- It's strange because the Watchtower recently settled with a victim in Pennsylvania for an undisclosed amount. I am not sure why they haven't done the same here. They seem intent on remaining silent about this, for whatever reason, why not enter into a confidential settlement and leave it at that.

I am not saying they should. Obviously the more information that they release the better for other victims to come forward. It's just a surprising legal strategy to have so much evidence, an admission of guilt, against Campos, and still move forward with this case.

I will keep following this. Thx-dH

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