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Prosecutors seek more time to find other victims in voyeurism case against rabbi



Rabbi Barry Freundel at Keshet Israel synagogue in Washington, D.C. (Lloyd Wolf)

By **Keith L. Alexander** November 12 at 11:48 AM

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District prosecutors investigating the case of a Georgetown rabbi charged with secretly videotaping women using a ritual bath told a D.C. Superior Court judge Wednesday that they needed more time to determine whether there are any additional victims before deciding whether to offer a plea deal.

[Barry Freundel](#) stood next to his lawyer as Assistant U.S. Attorney Amy Zubrensky told the judge that her office needed more time to investigate the case, at which point

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they will determine what type of plea deal her office might offer.

Freundel, 62, [was arrested in October](#) and charged with six counts of misdemeanor voyeurism. He faces up to six years in prison in connection with accusations that he hid a mini-camera in a clock radio in the shower area and videotaped women using the ritual bath, known as a [mikvah](#), at the Keshet Israel Congregation in Georgetown.

Jeffrey Harris, Freundel's attorney, told Judge Patricia Wynn that he had not been able to review any of the evidence since prosecutors have not shared it with his office.

Another hearing was scheduled for Jan. 16.

Separately, Zubrensky told the judge that the U.S. attorney's office was creating a Web site that outlined the case and gives contact information for victims' rights advocates and upcoming hearing dates, in an effort to reach out to other potential victims. "There may be numerous victims we don't know about," Zubrensky said.

Harris objected to Freundel's charging documents being part of the U.S. attorney's Web site. He said the documents could unfairly impact his client. Wynn suggested that the documents not be used.

Wynn also cancelled Freundel's weekly check-ins with court officials, saying that Freundel has been compliant and that she did not find further check-ins necessary.

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Nearly a half-dozen victim advocates from the U.S. attorney's office sat in the back of the courtroom, wearing name badges in case any potential victims were in the courtroom.

At the hearing, one attorney, Ira Sherman, sat in the courtroom on behalf of one woman who he said "might" be a victim. Sherman declined to identify the woman, but said she went through the mikvah this year. Sherman said police asked his client to submit a photograph last week so that they could determine whether she was on one of the videos found.

According to court documents, police found recordings of six women — partially or fully undressed — on two dates in 2014. The bath is used primarily for people converting to Judaism and by observant Jewish women at very intimate times as a way of coming closer to God.

Freundel has been suspended without pay from Keshet Israel. He has also been suspended from Towson University, where he taught religious studies. Police and officials at the university are investigating whether Freundel invited his students to use the ritual bath.

Keith Alexander covers crime, specifically D.C. Superior Court cases for The Washington Post. He has covered dozens of crime stories from Banita Jacks, the Washington woman charged with killing her four daughters, to the murder trial of slain congressional intern Chandra Levy.

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