

COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF NASSAU

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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,

-- against --

JESSE FRIEDMAN,

Defendant,

AFFIDAVIT OF
RICHARD TILKER

Indictment Nos.
67104, 67430, 69783

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Richard Tilker hereby swears, under penalties of perjury, that the following is true and correct:

1. I am 54 years old. I currently live in Great Neck, New York and am retired from my work as director of operations, specialty events, for Ferons, a major retailer of tennis apparel.
2. I reside with my family in Great Neck, New York. When my son was about 7 years old, he attended the computer classes taught by Arnold and Jesse Friedman.
3. During the investigation of Jesse and Arnold Friedman, we were visited on at least three different occasions by two-person teams of detectives from the Nassau County Police Department. They wanted to question my son Brian with regards to allegations that children had been sexually abused in the Friedman computer classes.
4. Each time the detectives visited, they told us that they knew "something happened" to our son. They didn't say, "We believe," they said, "We know," and they insisted on speaking to our son alone.
5. On one occasion, my wife and I told them they could question Brian alone, but I remained within earshot, and I was shocked by the aggressive manner in

which they questioned this young boy. It was clear to me that the detectives had already formed their opinion of what had happened in the computer classes and that they were just trying to get Brian to agree with their story. It got to a point where it wasn't asking him what happened, it was more of them telling him what happened, and when they didn't like what he had to say they kept repeating they know what happened and that he should tell.

6. I recall that the questioning just got to be too much. The police wouldn't take no for an answer. Frustrated, Brian finally he told them that one time he saw Jesse chase after and hit a child, though he later told us that that was not true and that the only reason he had said that was to end the questioning because they wouldn't leave him alone.

7. Throughout the time during which the police had questioned me and my son Brian, the detectives, including one in particular who was an Africa-American male, were carrying a notepad and took copious notes of all the comments we made, including my son's repeated comments telling them that nothing inappropriate had happened to him and that he had not witnessed any abuse of any other person in his classes.

8. The police used many different approaches in trying to persuade the children to answer their questions in the way they wished them to. For example, we heard from other parents the police would have pizza parties and give police badges to the children who cooperated, making them "junior detectives" in return for their cooperation.

9. I remember receiving phone calls from the parents of other students who were allegedly abused. These parents were insistent that my wife and I should cooperate

with the police and acknowledge that Brian had been abused. They told us that their son, who had been in class alongside Brian, had already acknowledged that he had been abused, and that he had seen Brian abused. I told them that my wife and I discussed it with Brian, who was a very mature and forthright boy, and he told us that no such thing had occurred. When we told the parents of the other boy, they became very pushy and told us that we were “in denial” and that “it absolutely happened to our son.” Not only did we speak to Brian, but we had him speak with a clinical psychologist, who told us that in his view, Brian was being completely truthful and that nothing had happened to him.

10. Because of the nature of the charges against the Friedmans, I remember the community being in an uproar and that there was a tremendous amount of pressure for children to join the case. The anger at the Friedmans was very strong. In one case, I had even gotten a call from one of the other families involved in the case, who asked if I would be willing to participate in seeking that Mr. Friedman “had an accident” while he was out taking a walk during the time in which he was home on house arrest. It was my interpretation that he and some of the other parents were contemplating trying to harm or kill Mr. Friedman. I remember other families of students who were allegedly abused in the computer classes would meet once a month together to plan strategies for maximizing the punishment of the Friedmans.

11. Another reason why I felt the charges against the Friedmans were implausible is that I was in charge of the car-pool to drop off and pick up my son and his friends from the computer classes, including the boy whose parents are mentioned above, and who became a major complainant in the case. I never even once noticed my son or

any of the other children disturbed or distressed in any way. If these boys had been violently abused during each computer class, I would have seen some evidence of this in their behavior on any of the many occasions on which I picked my son and his friends up at the classes.

12. I know one of the children who testified against Jesse Friedman saying he was a victim of sexual abuse during the computer classes because at the time he was friends with my son, and my wife and I were friends with his parents. This child had told a number of lies about my son, our family, and others in the past, and so it was not a surprise to me that he had become one of the main complainants in the Friedman case, and that he was so excited about having a chance to talk to the police and be the center of attention. That was the kind of boy he was.

Richard Tilker

Sworn before me this 9th
day of November 2003