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MEDIA RELEASE
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**FORMER SHELTON, WASHINGTON BOY SCOUT
FILES CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE LAWSUIT
AGAINST MORMON CHURCH, BOY SCOUTS**

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Seattle, Wash—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormon Church), the Boy Scouts of America, and the Pacific Harbor Council of the Boy Scouts were the subjects, of a new childhood sex abuse lawsuit filed on Monday, November 16, in King County Circuit Court, Seattle. The case arises out of abuse by a Mormon Church sponsored Boy Scout leader in the town of Shelton, Washington in 1978-79. The plaintiff, who was not identified in court filings and no longer lives in Shelton, named as the abuser Dustin “Dusty” Hall, at the time of the abuse in his late twenties or early thirties, and Assistant Scout Master, operated and chartered by the Shelton Ward of the Mormon Church, in what was known as the Olympia Stake of the LDS Church.

The suit alleges abuse on more than 30 occasions, when the victim, now in his early 40’s, was 13 years of age and a member of both the LDS Ward and the Scout Troop, according to Portland attorney Kelly Clark, who has handled nearly 200 cases of childhood sexual abuse on behalf of adults who were abused as children, in cases against churches, the Boy Scouts, schools, and other youth organizations. The victim will testify that numerous other boys were also abused by Hall, said Clark, often on Scout camping trips or on overnight sleepovers at Hall’s home, when he would force one or more boys to sleep with him.

The victim released a statement through Clark in which he said he still carries “heavy guilt” that he allowed himself and others to be abused and did nothing to stop it: “I carry with me even today a deep shame and heavy guilt that I let down all the other boys who were abused, some of whom were younger than me, because I did nothing to stop it. While the abuse was happening, I would try to get the courage to jump up and run for help, but over and over again I could not, and each time this happened, I would go away hating myself for letting it happen again, and for not protecting the others. I know rationally that I was only a boy myself, but I still blame myself for what happened to them.”

According to Clark, though it was discovered that Hall had abused boys in the Scout troop in 1979, neither the Scouts nor the LDS Church reported the matter to law enforcement.

The suit also contends that the Boy Scouts, or the LDS Church, or both, had reason to know that Hall was dangerous to children before the plaintiff was ever abused, according Clark: “This boy was totally committed to the Mormon Church and Boy Scouts, and he is remarkably still a highly devout Mormon, but he is convinced that what happened to him could have been prevented, and so he is determined to try to prevent future child abuse, both in the Scouts and in the LDS Church. He hopes and believes this litigation will aid in that goal, as well as securing some kind of justice for him.”

Now, says Clark, the criminal statute of limitations has long passed, and so civil justice is the only remedy available for the victim. “We believe that civil litigation prevents future child abuse, by convincing organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the Mormon Church-- which do a lot of good in many ways-- to report all allegations of child abuse to law enforcement, to review and revise their policies, and to better protect children.”

The Seattle case is one of a handful of abuse cases Clark filed Monday up and down the West Coast (San Francisco, Portland, Seattle), all against the Mormon Church, four of which also name the Boy Scouts as defendants.

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