

Day care owner sued over sex abuse of twins

◆ **NORWALK** — The suit claims the owner of Joanne's Kids Family Day Care did nothing to stop her son's abuse of the sisters.

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A civil suit has been filed against the Norwalk day care provider whose son sexually assaulted two young twin girls in her care.

Joanne Linarte, owner and operator of Joanne's Kids Family Day Care, is facing two civil suits, one for each of the girls.

The victims, now 13, were first left in Linarte's care when they were 2 years old. Linarte's son, Francisco Linarte Jr., sexually abused the girls from the time they were five until they were 11.

In May, Francisco Linarte, Jr., 22, was convicted of sexually assaulting the sisters and is facing 15 to 20 years in prison.

The lawsuit, filed Thursday by Stamford attorneys Ernest Teitell and Paul Slager of Silver, Golub and Teitell, accused Linarte of extreme negligence that allowed the two girls to be repeatedly abused by her son.

The suit seeks damages in excess of \$15,000 for each victim, in addition to costs or further relief the court may deem appropriate.

Linarte's facility provided overnight care for children whose parents worked during the day in addition to day care. It was during these overnight

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stays that the abuse occurred.

In court documents, Teitell said that Joanne Linarte allowed her son to have access to the girls' bedroom at night while she locked herself in her room "almost as if she didn't want to know what was going on with the girls for whom she was supposed to be caring."

Teitell said the girls repeatedly tried to tell Joanne Linarte what was happening, but that each time they went to her room they found her door locked.

"They were easy prey for Francisco Linarte's sexual perversions," Teitell said.

The girls did not report the abuse they suffered by Linarte to their mother until August 2002.

While a criminal case was only able to focus the abuser's wrongdoing, a civil case is able to focus on the broader harm done to the victim and can include all persons responsible for that harm.

Slager said the lawsuit seeks compensation for the girls who "suffered profound psychological and emotional trauma as a result of these horrific events and to help them pay for the therapy and other services they will require throughout their lives."

In their complaint, Slager and Teitell list severe emotional distress, depression, embarrassment, humiliation, difficulties in relationships with family and friends, intimacy issues, behavioral difficulties, physical injury and post-traumatic stress disorder as some of the injuries suffered by the girls as a result of Francisco Linarte's repeated abuse.