

# **EXHIBIT 37**

1 SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

2 HUDSON COUNTY, LAW DIVISION

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3 MICHAEL FERGUSON, BENJAMIN UNGER, SHELDON  
4 BRUCK, CHAIM LEVIN, JO BRUCK, BELLA LEVIN,

5 Plaintiffs,

6 - against -

7 JONAH (Jews Offering New Alternatives for  
8 Healing f/k/a Jews Offering New Alternatives to  
9 Homosexuality), ARTHUR GOLDBERG, ALAN DOWNING,  
10 ALAN DOWNING LIFE COACHING LLC,

11 Defendants.

12 DOCKET NO.: L-5473-13

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13 One Liberty Plaza  
14 New York, New York

15 May 21, 2014  
16 9:35 a.m.

17 VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION of JONATHAN  
18 HOFFMAN, before Melissa Gilmore, a Notary  
19 Public of the State of New York.  
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22

23 ELLEN GRAUER COURT REPORTING CO. LLC  
24 126 East 56th Street, Fifth Floor  
25 New York, New York 10022  
212-750-6434  
REF: 107219

1 HOFFMAN

2 Q. Before going to JONAH, have you ever  
3 seen any other counselor for any other purpose?  
4 By counselor, you know, I mean someone for any  
5 type of psychological or emotional issues?

6 A. Yeah. I saw a therapist when I was  
7 in the age of -- when I was in the 11th grade.  
8 My parents sent me to this therapist because  
9 they discovered that I was struggling around  
10 that time with same sex attractions. The  
11 therapist did not at all, although, have any  
12 expertise at, I guess, whatever type of therapy  
13 you want to call this, gender affirming  
14 therapy, change therapy, conversion therapy,  
15 whatever you want to call it, and it was more  
16 talk therapy, and not so effective at all at  
17 helping me with anything.

18 Q. What was it you were concerned about  
19 your life, if anything, other than same sex  
20 attraction? Were there any behaviors that were  
21 of concern to you or your parents?

22 A. With the struggle?

23 Q. Right.

24 A. Yeah. I was an addict to porn, I  
25 would say. At a very young age, I started

1 HOFFMAN

2 acting out with men, random hookups, behavior  
3 that I just felt beyond even religious reasons  
4 was very destructive to my way of wanting to  
5 live a fulfilling life.

6 Q. Okay. When you were a minor, were  
7 you having these sexual encounters with adult  
8 men?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. When you went to see Mr. Downing for  
11 the first time, what did you understand was the  
12 type of work he did? Did you think he was a  
13 life coach? And if so, was it different than a  
14 licensed professional counselor? What was your  
15 understanding?

16 A. I knew that he was a life coach, and  
17 I met Alan Downing through my own JIM weekend.  
18 He staffed it. And I immediately knew, when I  
19 met him, that he was someone that I could turn  
20 to for support, and he seemed to be very  
21 knowledgeable about helping men effectively get  
22 past unwanted same sex attractions.

23 So I knew when I went to see him  
24 that he was -- he was a life coach, but what  
25 mattered to me most was the expertise and the

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healthy, non-sexual way, in a way that's very fulfilling and effective and hopefully that can last after the weekend.

Q. Did you feel, before you started with JONAH or participated in People Can Change weekends, that you were able to bond with men in what you call a healthy, non-sexual way?

A. Before?

Q. Yeah.

MR. WOLFE: Leading as well.

A. Not always. That was the problem in my judgment for myself, was that I had a very hard time like connecting to men both in a sexual way. You know, obviously, a lot of my connections to men I could take sexually, although we can get -- it's not so important, I think, for like the details in that, but -- but definitely before the workshops, the JONAH workshop, and the JIM workshop, my connection to men, I would say, was actually more damaged on an emotional level. Like I had a very hard time relating emotionally without there being aspects of codependency or sort of clinginess to a lot of the deep friendships that I made,

1 HOFFMAN

2 and altogether, I just wasn't good at it. I  
3 was very isolated from a lot of men.

4 I didn't know how to just go forward  
5 with friendships and initiate friendships in a  
6 way that was long lasting and fulfilling. So  
7 that's how I was before the weekends.

8 Q. Okay. You used the term  
9 "processes."

10 What do you mean by that?

11 A. Processes on the weekends?

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. Well, there's just several different  
14 processes that the weekend would bring up and  
15 present throughout the course of the duration  
16 of the weekend, which usually, for both the  
17 JONAH and the JIM weekend, they're around two  
18 and a half days, and processes are usually  
19 around an hour in length, sometimes maybe  
20 shorter, depends on what type of process, but  
21 processes that are brought up, look at  
22 different -- again, different aspects of a  
23 person's dimension with this attraction,  
24 especially those aspects that relate to  
25 wounding from the past, wounding around

1 HOFFMAN

2 self-esteem, self-identity, wounding in  
3 relation to other men. It could be also women  
4 as well, mother, father, friends, brothers and  
5 all these processes that we would do would  
6 start to look at sort of these specific  
7 variables that we believe played a part in our  
8 same sex attractions.

9 Q. Can you identify some of these  
10 processes?

11 A. There's a lot of them, yeah.

12 Q. Well, we've heard of healthy touch.  
13 What is that?

14 MR. WOLFE: Objection, leading.

15 A. Healthy touch is a process that  
16 enables men to experience intimacy that they  
17 lacked throughout a lot of their lives,  
18 intimacy that they crave. And intimacy does,  
19 according to these processes, include a  
20 physical dimension, a physical dimension of  
21 receiving caring, warm, affirming touch that  
22 men simply didn't have from other men growing  
23 up, especially from important figures in their  
24 lives, such as father or even friends, which I  
25 believe is something that men need from each

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A. A hundred percent, yes.

Q. Did you staff any other types of these weekends we have talked about other than People Can Change or JONAH weekends?

A. There is another weekend called the Nobleman weekend that's, again, it's not for men who struggle with same sex attractions alone. It's actually staffed by women, but they have men helping out, but the women primarily run the processes and I have staffed that weekend.

I think that's it.

Q. Okay. What were the kinds of wounds you felt you experienced in your life that led you to want to seek out JONAH and Mr. Downing for help?

A. So I discovered very clearly that the wounds that were really requiring this journey was wounds definitely related to peers, to peer bullying, feeling like I don't really fit in among my friends or among the cool guys, the way I defined cool.

I never felt before, this work, really adequate as a man, because of those peer



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HOFFMAN

wounding, because of me not feeling I could fit in.

I also had some body image issues. I never thought that I was attractive before this work. I hated myself for being skinny and having a high pitched voice before this work.

I had slight mother enmeshment issues that I had to work past, but that wasn't as severe as really the peer aspect of things.

I was also very much lacking within the peer world intimacy, you know, closeness and deep connection. I had very superficial friendships with other men that weren't really fulfilling on a sort of a friendship emotional level, and that was something I really needed.

I had addictive behavior, I would say before this work, looking for escapes from pain, pain that related to what I just discussed, you know, not having friendships and whatnot.

Q. What are the addictive -- I realize some of this stuff is kind of sensitive. I apologize for that, but it feels necessary, and I'm sure opposing counsel will be asking, so I

1 HOFFMAN

2 need to ask.

3 What are some of the types of  
4 addictive behaviors that you're talking about?

5 A. Again, I think I mentioned this  
6 already, but porn and masturbation and acting  
7 out with men very quickly and easily through  
8 online hookups and so it was just, yeah, stuff  
9 like that.

10 Q. Okay. What did Mr. Downing do to  
11 try to help you overcome these wounds or  
12 addictive behaviors you mentioned?

13 A. So Alan Downing was really good at  
14 helping me get to the heart of what these  
15 behaviors were being driven by. For example,  
16 with peers, I would look at the messages about  
17 myself in relation to how I was defining other  
18 men when I was younger, and how I felt very  
19 distant from them, and Alan would help me get  
20 in touch with that disconnect of how I defined  
21 myself versus how I define other men and  
22 noticing how different that was. I couldn't  
23 define myself as a man.

24 So we would then look at that and  
25 process it and get in touch with the emotion

1 HOFFMAN

2 THE WITNESS: Sorry.

3 A. No. I never experienced that.

4 Q. In terms of your experiences when  
5 you came to JONAH, had you -- well, have you  
6 ever identified your sexual orientation as gay?

7 MR. WOLFE: Objection, leading.

8 A. No. I never identified myself as  
9 gay, even when I was acting out or having  
10 strong behaviors and feelings that were clearly  
11 gay, if you want to call them that.

12 Q. Okay. Prior to going to JONAH, say  
13 we take a scale of one to ten, where one would  
14 be minimal same sex attraction and ten being  
15 what you consider, you know, obsessive or out  
16 of control same sex attraction, before going to  
17 JONAH, how would you rate your same sex  
18 attraction?

19 MR. WOLFE: Objection, leading.

20 A. Between nine and ten, especially ten  
21 when I was in my very addictive state of  
22 constantly acting out and looking for men to be  
23 with in that way.

24 Q. How would you rate your same sex  
25 attraction now using the same scale?

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HOFFMAN

Q. I'm just asking you to look, just thumb through 103, 104, 105.

A. Oh, glance through it, yeah, uh-huh.

Q. Does this look like one of the nudity exercises with Mr. Downing on July 7, 2008?

A. Yeah, it does.

Q. Was there more than one nudity exercise with Mr. Downing?

A. I think so. Yep, there was at least two, that I recall.

Q. It could have been more than two?

A. Two or three, let's just -- to be safe, yeah.

Q. Those were all individual sessions?

A. Yes.

Q. Your body image issues, the imaging before, those are a component of your same sex attraction?

A. Yeah. Yes.

Q. How did the session progress? What was happening on 104?

A. Let's see here. I think what was happening on 104 is an intake of what I