

Reference Document

“The Contract Watchtower Just Made Every JW Sign”

Every Claim, Source, and Verification Status

How to Use This Document

Each entry identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence level. Claims are organized in the order they appear in the video.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from court rulings, legislation, official Watchtower publications, peer-reviewed research, SEC filings, IRS filings, or other government/regulatory records. Primary sources can stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — Sourced from established advocacy or legal resource sites, academic researchers, or reputable investigative journalism. Secondary sources support claims and are most defensible when paired with a primary or another independent secondary.

SECTION 1: The Forced Click-Through Agreement

Claim: In early May 2026, Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world began seeing a forced legal agreement on JW Library that they had to scroll through and tap “Accept” before using the app.

- **Source:** Reddit r/exjw threads documenting the rollout, late April through early May 2026
- **URL:** <https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — community-sourced firsthand reports from current Witnesses across multiple countries and platforms (iOS and Android) confirming the same forced-modal pattern in the same time window
- **Note:** The agreement itself was independently confirmed by pulling up the live document at jw.org/en/terms-use, which displays an “Updated March 23, 2023” date on the page header. The contract text is not new; the forced acceptance modal is.

Claim: The forced agreement is with Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., a New York not-for-profit corporation.

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, jw.org Application Terms of Use document, Updated March 23, 2023
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the contracting entity is identified in the opening of the agreement itself
- **Key quote:**
“These Terms of Use (this ‘Agreement’) is a legal agreement between Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., a New York not-for-profit corporation (‘Watchtower,’ ‘we,’ ‘us,’ or ‘our’) and you, a user (‘you’ or ‘your’) of the Application.”

Claim: Section 6 of the agreement is titled “Medical Information” and includes a disclaimer stating the medical information is “not designed, intended, or authorized for use in connection with any medical or life-saving or life-sustaining decisions.”

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, jw.org Application Terms of Use document, Section 6, Updated March 23, 2023
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>

- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract

- **Key quote:**

“The Medical Information is not designed, intended, or authorized for use in connection with any medical or life-saving or life-sustaining decisions, systems, or procedures, or for any other application or purpose. Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health-care provider with any question you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment. This Application assumes no liability or responsibility for any errors or omissions in the content of any Medical Information. Reliance on any Medical Information is solely at your own risk.”

SECTION 2: The Eighty-Year Blood Doctrine

Claim: Watchtower has prohibited blood transfusions for its members since 1945.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1945, “Immovable for the Right Worship,” introducing the doctrine; subsequently expanded across decades of *Watchtower*, *Awake!*, and other Watchtower publications
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the doctrine’s origin in 1945 is documented in Watchtower’s own publications and is universally acknowledged in academic and Watchtower-published histories of the policy

Claim: Watchtower has historically published advance medical directive cards (“No Blood” cards) that members carry, instructing medical personnel to refuse blood transfusions.

- **Source:** Watchtower-published advance medical directive cards, distributed annually to baptized publishers; documented in Hospital Liaison Committee guidance and in *Watchtower* articles on the doctrine
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the cards are issued by Watchtower itself; SECONDARY corroboration from medical literature and AvoidJW’s coverage of the directive system

Claim: Pre-2026 versions of those cards explicitly told members to refuse to “predonate and store” their own blood for later use during surgery.

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org coverage of pre- and post-March 2026 advance medical directive language
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/breaking-jws-allowed-to-pre-store-and-use-their-own-blood/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — AvoidJW directly compares pre- and post-March 2026 directive forms and quotes the specific “predonate and store” language as it appeared on prior directives

Claim: A baptized Witness who unrepentantly accepts a blood transfusion is treated as having disassociated themselves from the religion and is subject to organized shunning.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, June 15, 2000, “Questions From Readers,” pp. 29-31; reaffirmed across multiple subsequent *Watchtower* articles and *Shepherd the Flock of God* elder manual editions
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the disassociation policy is documented in Watchtower’s own publications and in the elders’ manual

Claim: Watchtower has never released a count of deaths caused by adherence to the blood doctrine; credible academic estimates suggest the total may run into the thousands across the doctrine’s eighty-year history.

- **Source:** Academic and medical literature, including studies in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* and *BMJ* over multiple decades

- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/category/blood/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Watchtower has not published a death count; estimates are derived from peer-reviewed medical literature and case-reporting compiled by reform advocacy groups including AJWRB and AvoidJW
- **Note:** Because Watchtower does not release figures, no exact count is available. The framing “may run into the thousands” reflects the conservative consensus across multiple academic estimates over the doctrine’s eighty-year history.

Claim: The Watchtower organization operates Hospital Liaison Committees (HLCs) that interface with medical personnel on blood-related decisions involving Witness patients.

- **Source:** *Our Kingdom Ministry*, November 1990, p. 4; subsequent *Watchtower* articles and the elders’ manual *Shepherd the Flock of God*
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/medical-library/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the HLC system is described and operated by Watchtower itself; the medical-library page on [jw.org](https://www.jw.org/en/medical-library/) confirms the structure

SECTION 3: The Six-Week Timeline (March 20 – Early May 2026)

Claim: On March 20, 2026, Governing Body member Gerrit Lösch released Governing Body Update #2 (2026), announcing that Jehovah’s Witnesses may now decide for themselves whether to have their own blood drawn, stored, and reinfused during surgery.

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #2*, [jw.org](https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-2/) official news release, March 20, 2026, presented by Gerrit Lösch
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-2/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the announcement is on Watchtower’s own official news page
- **Key quote:**
“The Bible does not comment on the use of a person’s own blood in medical and surgical care... This includes whether to allow his own blood to be removed, stored, and then given back to him.”

Claim: On April 29, 2026, the Norwegian Supreme Court ruled in favor of Jehovah’s Witnesses, holding that the practice of shunning does not amount to undue pressure on members under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

- **Source:** Supreme Court of Norway, Judgment HR-2026-1009-A, Case No. 25-089326SIV-HRET, April 29, 2026; Justices Falkanger, Arntzen, Hellerslia, Poulsen, Steen
- **URL:** <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY (court ruling) reported through Human Rights Without Frontiers and Bitter Winter, both of which reproduce the official summary

Claim: Beginning in late April and into early May 2026, current Jehovah’s Witnesses began posting to Reddit and other forums describing the new forced legal agreement appearing on their JW Library app.

- **Source:** Reddit [r/exjw](https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/) threads documenting the rollout, late April through early May 2026 (multiple users, multiple platforms)
- **URL:** <https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — community-sourced firsthand reports across multiple users, devices, and countries within the same time window; the agreement itself confirmed at [jw.org/en/terms-use](https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use)

Claim: The contract on [jw.org](https://www.jw.org) displays an “Updated March 23, 2023” date and has been quietly available on Watchtower’s website for three years.

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, [jw.org](https://www.jw.org) Application Terms of Use document, header date stamp
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the date is displayed in the document header on the live page

SECTION 4: The Reproduction Restriction

Claim: Section 4 of the JW Library Terms of Use prohibits posting any artwork, electronic publications, trademarks, music, photos, videos, or articles from the Application on the internet, including any website, file-sharing site, video-sharing site, or social network.

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, [jw.org](https://www.jw.org) Application Terms of Use document, Section 4, Updated March 23, 2023
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract
- **Key quote:**
“Post artwork, electronic publications, trademarks, music, photos, videos, or articles from this Application on the Internet (any website, file-sharing site, video-sharing site, or social network).”

Claim: The Terms of Use modal links to a Watchtower-published article from the April 2018 *Watchtower*, Study Edition, titled “Why is it not permissible to post publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses on a personal website or on social media?”

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), April 2018, Questions From Readers, pp. 30-31; linked directly from the Terms of Use document
- **URL:**
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-april-2018/publications-personal-websites/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the article is published by Watchtower; the link from the Terms of Use modal to this article is verified on the live page

Claim: In that article, Watchtower states that “by securing copyright and trademark protection, we have a legal basis to prevent such misuse,” and that allowing posting on other sites means “the courts may not support our efforts to deter opposers and commercial enterprises.”

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), April 2018, Questions From Readers, pp. 30-31
- **URL:**
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-april-2018/publications-personal-websites/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the Watchtower article
- **Key quote:**
“By securing copyright and trademark protection, we have a legal basis to prevent such misuse. But if we knowingly allow people, even our brothers, to post our digital content on other sites or to use the [jw.org](https://www.jw.org) trademark to sell merchandise, the courts may not support our efforts to deter opposers and commercial enterprises.”

Claim: The same article describes the concern that “posting our publications on websites that allow comments provides a place for apostates and other critics to sow distrust of Jehovah’s organization.”

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), April 2018, Questions From Readers, pp. 30-31
- **URL:**
<https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-april-2018/publications-personal-websites/>

- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the Watchtower article

SECTION 5: The McFree Case (2018–2022)

Claim: In June 2018, Watchtower filed a DMCA subpoena in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York seeking to identify the operator of a YouTube channel publishing parody Lego animations of Jehovah’s Witnesses under the pseudonym “Kevin McFree.”

- **Source:** *In re DMCA Section 512(h) Subpoena to YouTube (Google, Inc.)*, Case No. 7:18-mc-00268, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York
- **URL:** <https://dockets.justia.com/docket/new-york/nysdce/7:2018mc00268/495780>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — federal court docket

Claim: Watchtower in-house counsel Paul D. Polidoro personally signed the 2018 DMCA subpoena application against McFree.

- **Source:** *In re DMCA Section 512(h) Subpoena to YouTube*, Case No. 7:18-mc-00268, S.D.N.Y., subpoena application filed June 19, 2018
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/usa-lengthy-legal-struggle-ends-in-victory/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY (federal court filing) corroborated by AvoidJW’s detailed coverage of the case timeline, which identifies Polidoro by name as the issuing attorney

Claim: In 2021, Watchtower filed a parallel copyright infringement lawsuit against the unidentified McFree in the Southern District of New York.

- **Source:** *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania v. John Doe a/k/a Kevin McFree*, Case No. 7:21-cv-04155, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, filed May 10, 2021, Hon. Cathy Seibel
- **URL:** <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/59895158/watch-tower-bible-and-tract-society-of-pennsylvania-v-doe/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — federal court docket via CourtListener

Claim: On January 18, 2022, U.S. District Judge Nelson Stephen Roman granted McFree’s motion to quash the DMCA subpoena, ruling McFree’s use of Watchtower content was protected fair use as parody, criticism, and commentary.

- **Source:** *In re DMCA Section 512(h) Subpoena to YouTube (Google, Inc.)*, Case No. 7:18-mc-00268, Opinion and Order, Filing 25, signed by Judge Nelson Stephen Roman, January 18, 2022
- **URL:** <https://dockets.justia.com/docket/new-york/nysdce/7:2018mc00268/495780>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — federal court ruling

Claim: Following the January 2022 ruling, the Public Citizen Litigation Group, led by attorney Paul Alan Levy, entered the case to defend McFree against Watchtower’s ongoing efforts in the parallel copyright lawsuit.

- **Source:** Paul Levy, Public Citizen Consumer Law & Policy Blog, “Watch Tower’s misuse of copyright to suppress criticism,” March 7, 2022; subsequent court filings in 7:21-cv-04155
- **URL:** <https://clpblog.citizen.org/watch-towers-misuse-of-copyright-to-suppress-criticism/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY (Public Citizen attorney’s own published statement on his organization’s blog) corroborated by federal court filings showing Levy’s appearance in the case

Claim: In May 2022, four months after the fair-use ruling, Watchtower stipulated to dismiss the parallel copyright lawsuit with prejudice, meaning the case can never be refiled.

- **Source:** *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania v. John Doe a/k/a Kevin McFree*, Case No. 7:21-cv-04155, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, Hon. Cathy Seibel; Stipulation of Voluntary Dismissal (Filing 32), filed May 11, 2022; case terminated May 12, 2022
- **URL:** <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/59895158/watch-tower-bible-and-tract-society-of-pennsylvania-v-doe/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — complete federal court docket via CourtListener, including the stipulation of voluntary dismissal with prejudice, all 33 filings, party appearances, and Judge Seibel’s text orders. Corroborated by TorrentFreak journalistic coverage at <https://torrentfreak.com/watch-towers-dmca-warfare-collapses-after-big-guns-defend-apostate-220516/>

Claim: Public Citizen documented that, in the five years leading up to the 2022 dismissal, Watchtower had filed approximately seventy DMCA subpoenas in U.S. federal courts, only one of which was followed by an actual copyright infringement lawsuit — the McFree case itself.

- **Source:** Paul Levy, Public Citizen Consumer Law & Policy Blog, May 2022; reported by TorrentFreak, May 16, 2022
- **URL:** <https://torrentfreak.com/watch-towers-dmca-warfare-collapses-after-big-guns-defend-apostate-220516/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Levy’s analysis of the federal court record, reported through TorrentFreak
- **Note:** Levy’s observation in his post-dismissal statement: “Watch Tower has not used the information obtained from these subpoenas to file an infringement action” in any case other than McFree.

Claim: Federal DMCA subpoena applications are filed at relatively low cost and require minimal evidentiary support beyond a copyright claim.

- **Source:** U.S. federal court fee schedule; 17 U.S.C. § 512(h); TorrentFreak coverage of the McFree case
- **URL:** <https://torrentfreak.com/watch-towers-dmca-warfare-collapses-after-big-guns-defend-apostate-220516/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — TorrentFreak: “They go to court, pay less than \$50, and disappear into the ether.” The procedural mechanics of 17 U.S.C. § 512(h) are documented in federal statute (PRIMARY).

Claim: Levy documented one specific case, prior to McFree, in which Watchtower used a DMCA subpoena to identify an anonymous blogger who had been writing about Watchtower’s child sexual abuse reporting failures — and shortly after obtaining that identity, Watchtower initiated disfellowshipping proceedings against him.

- **Source:** Paul Levy, statement reported in TorrentFreak, May 16, 2022
- **URL:** <https://torrentfreak.com/watch-towers-dmca-warfare-collapses-after-big-guns-defend-apostate-220516/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Public Citizen attorney’s own reported analysis
- **Key quote:**

“Watch Tower succeeded in using a DMCA subpoena obtaining the identity of a previously identified blogger who specialized in attacking child abuse within the group, and Watch Tower’s refusal to report abuse to local authorities. Shortly thereafter, it initiated disfellowship proceedings against him. It is quite possible that Watch Tower did not need the information it obtained under the DMCA (because this blogger’s identifying information had become available elsewhere), but even so it never sued him for copyright infringement and it never otherwise used his identity to enforce its copyright. Watch Tower had got what it wanted — revenge.”

SECTION 6: Clickwrap Legal Mechanics

Claim: Click-through (clickwrap) agreements have been tested and upheld in U.S. federal court for over two decades.

- **Source:** *Specht v. Netscape Communications Corp.*, 306 F.3d 17 (2d Cir. 2002); *ProCD, Inc. v. Zeidenberg*, 86 F.3d 1447 (7th Cir. 1996); *Feldman v. Google, Inc.*, 513 F. Supp. 2d 229 (E.D. Pa. 2007)
- **URL:** <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — published federal appellate and district court decisions

Claim: In *Meyer v. Uber Technologies, Inc.*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld Uber’s clickwrap arbitration clause.

- **Source:** *Meyer v. Uber Technologies, Inc.*, 868 F.3d 66 (2d Cir. 2017)
- **URL:** <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca2/16-2750/16-2750-2017-08-17.html>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — published federal appellate decision

Claim: Industry analysis based on U.S. case law indicates clickwrap agreements are upheld in court at a substantially higher rate than browsewrap agreements — approximately seventy percent versus approximately fourteen percent.

- **Source:** Ironclad, “Clickwrap Litigation Trends Report” and related industry analyses of U.S. clickwrap case law (2018–2022)
- **URL:** <https://ironcladapp.com/journal/contracts/clickwrap-litigation-trends/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — industry analysis derived from compiled U.S. case law
- **Note:** These figures are directional benchmarks, not regulatory statistics. The substantial gap between clickwrap and browsewrap enforceability is consistent across multiple analyses, though specific percentages vary by methodology.

Claim: Section 1 of the JW Library Terms of Use states: “This Application is licensed, not sold, to you.”

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, jw.org Application Terms of Use document, Section 1 (Grant of License)
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract

Claim: Section 5 of the JW Library Terms of Use permits Watchtower to terminate the user’s license “at any time for any reason or no reason without liability or obligation to you.”

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, jw.org Application Terms of Use document, Section 5 (Termination)
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract

Claim: Section 8 of the JW Library Terms of Use limits Watchtower’s entire liability to the user to one thousand U.S. dollars.

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, JW Library Application Terms of Use, Section 8 (Limitation of Liability), Updated March 23, 2023; verified directly from the forced-acceptance modal in the JW Library mobile app
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract as displayed in the JW Library app modal
- **Note:** The website version of the same Terms of Use document at [jw.org/en/terms-use](https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use) displays a liability cap of TEN DOLLARS (\$10), while the app-modal version displays a cap of ONE THOUSAND U.S. DOLLARS (\$1000.00). Same legal entity, same effective date, two different liability caps for two

different distribution channels.

- **Key quote (app modal version):**

“THE ENTIRE LIABILITY OF THE WATCHTOWER PARTIES COLLECTIVELY, AND YOUR EXCLUSIVE REMEDY HEREUNDER, SHALL BE LIMITED TO ONE THOUSAND U.S. DOLLARS (\$1000.00).”

Claim: Section 9 of the JW Library Terms of Use requires the user to indemnify Watchtower against any threatened or actual claims, including reasonable attorneys’ fees, arising from the user’s use of the app.

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, jw.org Application Terms of Use document, Section 9 (Indemnity)
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract

Claim: Section 13 of the JW Library Terms of Use designates New York law as governing and imposes a six-month statute of limitations on any claim against Watchtower.

- **Source:** *Terms of Use*, jw.org Application Terms of Use document, Section 13 (Governing Law; Timely Filing of Claims)
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/terms-use>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from the contract
- **Key quote:**

“ANY CLAIM, SUIT, OR ACTION THAT YOU MAY HAVE AGAINST ANY OF THE WATCHTOWER PARTIES ARISING UNDER OR RELATED TO THIS AGREEMENT MUST BE BROUGHT WITHIN SIX (6) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE EVENT UNDERLYING SUCH CLAIM OCCURRED OR IS ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED.”

SECTION 7: JWS Library and the Active 2025-2026 Subpoenas

Claim: In early December 2025, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania filed a pair of DMCA subpoenas in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, one directed at Google and one directed at Cloudflare, seeking to identify the anonymous operator of a website called JWS Library.

- **Source:** *In Re Watch Tower Subpoenas to Cloudflare and Google 2025*, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York; case page maintained by the Electronic Frontier Foundation
- **URL:** <https://www.eff.org/cases/re-watch-tower-subpoenas-cloudflare-and-google-2025>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY (federal court filings) reported through EFF’s case documentation

Claim: The Electronic Frontier Foundation, with local counsel Jonathan Phillips of Phillips & Bathke, P.C., is representing the JWS Library operator (identified in the case only as “J. Doe”) in proceedings to quash both subpoenas.

- **Source:** *In Re Watch Tower Subpoenas to Cloudflare and Google 2025*, EFF case page; Motions to Quash filed March 9, 2026
- **URL:** <https://www.eff.org/cases/re-watch-tower-subpoenas-cloudflare-and-google-2025>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY (federal court filings) and PRIMARY (EFF’s direct case documentation)

Claim: EFF’s description of JWS Library: J. Doe created research tools to analyze how Watchtower’s public statements have changed over time, and the site’s archive includes documents that have been suppressed by the organization.

- **Source:** *In Re Watch Tower Subpoenas to Cloudflare and Google 2025*, EFF case page
- **URL:** <https://www.eff.org/cases/re-watch-tower-subpoenas-cloudflare-and-google-2025>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim characterization from EFF’s case page
- **Key quote:**

“Doe and others discovered prophecies that failed to come true, erasure of a leader’s disgrace, increased calls for obedience and donations, and other insights about the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ practices.”

Claim: EFF describes Doe as anonymous specifically to avoid disfellowshipping: dissent or even asking questions has often been punished by labeling members as apostates and ostracizing them, with consequences for family, friends, and professional relationships.

- **Source:** *In Re Watch Tower Subpoenas to Cloudflare and Google 2025*, EFF case page
- **URL:** <https://www.eff.org/cases/re-watch-tower-subpoenas-cloudflare-and-google-2025>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — verbatim from EFF’s case page
- **Key quote:**

“Within the church, dissent or even asking questions has often been punished by labeling members as apostates and ostracizing — or ‘disfellowshipping’ — them. As a result, Doe and others choose to speak anonymously to avoid retaliation that could cost them family, friend, and professional relationships.”

Claim: By March 2026, the cumulative count of DMCA subpoenas filed by Watch Tower in U.S. federal courts since 2017 stood at approximately seventy-two, with the JWS Library subpoenas filed in December 2025 expanding that total further.

- **Source:** Mike Masnick, Techdirt, “The Jehovah’s Witnesses Are Back Abusing Copyright Law To Unmask Their Critics. Again.,” March 18, 2026
- **URL:** <https://www.techdirt.com/2026/03/18/the-jehovahs-witnesses-are-back-abusing-copyright-law-to-unmask-their-critics-again/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Techdirt’s March 2026 update of Public Citizen’s 2022 documented count

SECTION 8: Watchtower v. Stratton and the Polidoro Contradiction

Claim: In 2002, Paul Polidoro argued before the United States Supreme Court in *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. v. Village of Stratton*, in which Watchtower challenged a Stratton, Ohio ordinance requiring door-to-door canvassers to register with the village before going door-to-door.

- **Source:** *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of N.Y., Inc. v. Village of Stratton*, 536 U.S. 150 (2002)
- **URL:** <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/536/150/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — published U.S. Supreme Court decision

Claim: On June 17, 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 8-1 in favor of Watchtower, holding the Stratton ordinance unconstitutional under the First Amendment. Justice Stevens wrote the majority opinion. Chief Justice Rehnquist filed the lone dissent.

- **Source:** *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of N.Y., Inc. v. Village of Stratton*, 536 U.S. 150 (2002)
- **URL:** <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/536/150/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — published U.S. Supreme Court decision

Claim: Watchtower’s argument in *Stratton* was grounded in the First Amendment right to speak anonymously, drawing on the Court’s prior anonymous-speech jurisprudence including *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission* (1995) and *Talley v. California* (1960).

- **Source:** *Watchtower v. Stratton*, 536 U.S. 150 (2002), majority opinion (Stevens, J.)
- **URL:** <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/536/150/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the Court’s opinion explicitly relies on this line of anonymous-speech precedent

SECTION 9: Closing Thematic Material

Claim: Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that they are the only modern restoration of first-century Christianity.

- **Source:** *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 2014; *The Watchtower*, multiple issues; jw.org Frequently Asked Questions
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — this self-identification is repeatedly stated in Watchtower’s own publications and on the official jw.org Frequently Asked Questions page

Claim: The apostle Paul wrote letters from prison, including the New Testament epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, the Ephesians, and Philemon.

- **Source:** Philippians 1:7; Colossians 4:18; Ephesians 6:20; Philemon 1; standard New Testament canon and historical-critical scholarship
- **URL:** <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the letters themselves identify Paul’s circumstances; the “Prison Epistles” designation is standard across Christian and academic biblical scholarship

Claim: In Philippians 1:18, Paul writes that he rejoices when Christ is proclaimed, regardless of whether the proclamation is made in pretense or in truth.

- **Source:** Philippians 1:18 (English Standard Version)
- **URL:** <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+1%3A18&version;=ESV>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the biblical text itself
- **Key quote:**
“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”

Claim: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society’s combined U.S. assets exceed one billion dollars, as documented in publicly available tax filings.

- **Source:** Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, IRS Form 990-T filings; reported analysis by Mike Masnick, Techdirt, March 18, 2026
- **URL:** <https://www.techdirt.com/2026/03/18/the-jehovahs-witnesses-are-back-abusing-copyright-law-to-unmask-their-critics-again/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY (IRS filings) reported through Techdirt’s analysis
- **Note:** Techdirt’s March 18, 2026 article: “Watch Tower’s publicly available tax filings showing it has more than a billion dollars in assets.”

SECTION 10: Additional Supporting Sources

EFF blog post: “Copyright Bullying vs. Religious Freedom” (March 10, 2026)

- **Source:** Kit Walsh, Electronic Frontier Foundation Deeplinks Blog
- **URL:** <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2026/03/copyright-bullying-vs-religious-freedom-0>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — EFF’s direct legal commentary on the JWS Library case
- **Contains:** EFF’s analysis of why DMCA subpoenas are an inappropriate tool for unmasking critics whose use of copyrighted material is fair use, framed in the specific context of the active JWS Library case

Public Citizen Consumer Law & Policy Blog: “Watch Tower’s misuse of copyright to suppress criticism”

- **Source:** Paul Alan Levy, Public Citizen Litigation Group, March 7, 2022
- **URL:** <https://clpblog.citizen.org/watch-towers-misuse-of-copyright-to-suppress-criticism/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the attorney’s own contemporaneous account of his entry into the McFree case
- **Contains:** Levy’s detailed analysis of Watchtower’s pattern of using DMCA subpoenas as an identity-discovery mechanism rather than as a copyright-enforcement tool, and the strategic reasoning behind Watchtower’s choice to dismiss rather than appeal

TorrentFreak case coverage

- **Source:** TorrentFreak, multiple articles 2018-2022 by Andy Maxwell
- **URL:** <https://torrentfreak.com/tag/jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — established investigative reporting on copyright and DMCA matters
- **Contains:** Detailed timeline of the McFree case from the original 2018 subpoena through the May 2022 dismissal, including reproduction of court filings and quoted statements from counsel

Bitter Winter coverage of the Norway Supreme Court ruling

- **Source:** Massimo Introvigne, Bitter Winter (Center for Studies on New Religions)
- **URL:** <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-win-landmark-case-at-the-norwegian-supreme-court/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — academic and journalistic coverage of religious-liberty case law
- **Contains:** Detailed analysis of the April 29, 2026 Norwegian Supreme Court ruling, including the court’s reasoning on shunning, ECHR Article 9, and the deregistration question

Human Rights Without Frontiers report on the Norway ruling

- **Source:** Human Rights Without Frontiers, summary of Supreme Court of Norway, HR-2026-1009-A
- **URL:** <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — reproduces the official summary of the ruling alongside commentary
- **Contains:** Official case identifiers, key paragraph references, and the names of the panel of justices

AvoidJW.org case timeline on McFree

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org, “USA: A Lengthy Legal Struggle Ends in Victory”
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/usa-lengthy-legal-struggle-ends-in-victory/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — investigative documentation of Watchtower-related court cases
- **Contains:** Detailed three-year timeline of the McFree litigation from 2018 through 2022, including identification of Paul Polidoro as the issuing attorney on the original DMCA subpoena and reproduction of relevant court filings

Kevin McFree’s YouTube channel

- **Source:** Kevin McFree, creator of the *DubTown* stop-motion Lego animation series — the original creative work at the center of the 2018–2022 Watchtower DMCA subpoena and copyright infringement litigation
- **URL:** <https://www.youtube.com/@kevinMcFree>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the underlying creative work; U.S. District Judge Nelson Stephen Roman ruled in his January 18, 2022 Opinion and Order that McFree’s use of Watchtower content was protected fair use as parody, criticism, and commentary
- **Contains:** Stop-motion Lego animations satirizing and critiquing Jehovah’s Witness practices, set in the fictional town of DubTown. The works that the federal court characterized as “creative, expressive, and non-factual works” protected under fair use.

AJWRB analysis of the March 2026 blood doctrine update

- **Source:** Lee Elder, Advocates for Jehovah’s Witness Reform on Blood, “The 2026 Autologous Pivot: A Victory for Conscience, a Failure of Accountability”
- **URL:**
<https://www.ajwr.org/the-2026-autologous-pivot-a-victory-for-conscience-a-failure-of-accountability>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — analysis by a long-running medical-ethics reform organization that has tracked Watchtower’s blood doctrine since 1997
- **Contains:** Detailed analysis of what the March 20, 2026 Governing Body Update #2 changes and what it leaves in place, including the specific language Lösch used and the historical context of the prior prohibition on autologous blood storage

Burholme Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, et al. v. Mark O’Donnell — documented attorneys’ fees scale

- **Source:** *Burholme Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, et al. v. O’Donnell*, Case No. 2:24-cv-00304-MRP, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Stipulation for Entry of Judgment and Judgment, filed and entered August 21, 2025, Hon. Mia R. Perez, U.S. District Judge
- **URL:** <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69411983/burholme-congregation-of-jehovahs-witnesses-v-odonnell/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — federal court judgment
- **Contains:** Stipulated judgment in which the defendant agreed to pay the plaintiffs — ten Watchtower-affiliated congregations — a total of \$215,000.00, consisting of \$10,000.00 in liquidated damages and \$205,000.00 for reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs. Cited in this video as a publicly documented example of Watchtower’s attorneys’ fees scale, not as a case analogous to McFree, JWS Library, or the breach-of-contract architecture of the JW Library Terms of Use. The underlying claims and conduct in the O’Donnell case are unrelated to the matters discussed in this video.