

**Ex-Colonia**                      **rabbi**                      **accused**                      **of**                      **molesting**                      **boy**  
By    Jim    O'Neill  
The                      Star-Ledger                      (Newark,                      NJ)                      -                      March                      1,                      1996

A former Woodbridge rabbi was indicted yesterday by a Middlesex County grand jury on charges of molesting a 10-year-old boy last summer.

Rabbi Gershon Freidlin, the 58-year-old former spiritual leader of Temple Ohev Shalom in Colonia, is charged with sexual assault and child endangerment in fondling the youngster on three occasions last July.

Assistant Prosecutor Barbara Clark Stolte claimed the rabbi undressed the youngster and rubbed tanning lotion on him, twice at the rabbi's home in Colonia and once at a neighbor's home.

The pre-teen was a friend of one of the rabbi's sons and had visited before the group was to go swimming at the neighbor's house, Stolte charged.

Freidlin now is the spiritual leader of a congregation in Pittsburgh, where he was hire after his two-year contract with the Colonia temple expired last Aug. 31. His attorney and supporters in the Jewish community contend the rabbi's leaving had no connection to the sex abuse charges.

His attorney, Barry Albin of Woodbridge, said Freidlin "unequivocally denies the charges and we are confident he will be cleared."

The rabbi's arrest in August stunned the community, after the youth told his mother of the incidents and she called police, Stolte said.

Freidlin was jailed in lieu of \$150,00 bail, which later was reduced to \$75,000. He was released from custody Aug. 28 after posting bail with the help of Rabbi Bernhard Rosenberg of Edison, one of his supporters.

Rosenberg and other Jewish community leaders have rallied to the rabbi's defense and have said Freidlin has adapted well at the New Light Congregation in Pittsburgh.

Stolte said the accuser was visiting the rabbi's 10-year-old son when the Freidlin's lived at a home provided by the Temple Ohev Shalom congregation on Temple Way, Colonia.

Following the rabbi's arrest, Assistant Prosecutor Julia McClure, who heads sex crimes investigations for the county, said that about three weeks after the alleged assaults, the youngster asked his mother "if things like this happened and if something was wrong with it."

It was then that the mother contacted police, McClure said.

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**Rabbi**                    **says**                    **he**                    **fondled**                    **young**                    **boy**  
by                    Jim                    O'Neill;                    Star-Ledger                    Staff  
Star-Ledger,                    The                    (Newark,                    NJ)                    -                    December                    14,                    1996

A 59-year-old rabbi yesterday admitted fondling a 10-year-old boy while serving as spiritual leader of a temple in the Colonia section of Woodbridge.

Rabbi Gershon Freidlin pleaded guilty to one count of child endangerment in New Brunswick, saying he had touched the youth's penis and buttocks while applying tanning lotion on the boy on July 10, 1995.

Under the terms of a plea agreement, the rabbi will not be jailed for the crime, but faces up to five years probation.

Superior Court Judge Barnett E. Hoffman ordered Freidlin to undergo a mental health examination, which will be used to determine if the rabbi will be ordered to comply with the provisions of Megan's Law, which requires certain sex offenders to register with the police. The judge set a March 17 sentencing date.

Freidlin had been spiritual leader of Temple Ohev Shalom in Colonia when he fondled the boy, according to police, who said the youngster was assaulted twice at the rabbi's home in Colonia and once at a neighbor's home.

The boy was a friend of the rabbi's 10-year-old son and stopped at the rabbi's home before the group went swimming at the neighbor's house, police said.

The rabbi was charged on Aug. 23, 1995, after the boy told his mother about the incident, police said.

Freidlin was jailed in lieu of \$150,000 bail, but was released from custody five days later when bail was reduced to \$75,000.

He moved from Colonia when his contract with the temple expired on Aug. 31, 1995. His attorney and supporters in the Jewish community said at the time that Freidlin's departure had no connection to the sex abuse charges.

He then became spiritual leader of a congregation in Pittsburgh.

His lawyer, Barry Albin of Woodbridge, declined to comment yesterday.

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