

November 19, 2018 - 11 Kislev 5779

STEPHEN SCHAFTER FOUND GUILTY OF COMMITTING SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST YOUNG BOYS

By **Ron Csillag, Staff Reporter** - November 16, 2018



Stephen Schacter, a former teacher at numerous Toronto Jewish day schools, has been found guilty of several sexual offences.

Schacter was found guilty on Nov. 16 of three counts of sexual assault, two counts of sexual interference and one count of gross indecency.

The offences occurred between 1982 and 2002. There were four complainants in the case, but a publication ban prevents the identification of the witnesses.

The court heard that a fifth complainant had come forward earlier, but abandoned pursuing the matter.

In his oral judgment, Judge David Corbett of the Superior Court of Justice said he did not believe all the testimony of one of the complainants, who was between 11 and 13 years old when the offences took place.

Corbett said the witness had been “clearly angry and upset,” and had displayed “overt hostility.” While the court didn’t believe everything he said, “something did happen” at that time, Corbett said. “I don’t think (the witness) was out for vengeance. I think he’s out for justice.”

Stephen Joseph Schacter

Despite the hostile nature of that testimony, it was “consistent with the conduct” alleged by the other three witnesses, which involved, among things, allegations of “inappropriate touching,” said Corbett.

Schacter showed no emotion when the verdict was rendered.

Separately, in May, he was found guilty of one count of possessing child pornography. Aspects of that case were introduced as evidence in the trial over the sexual offences.

At the earlier trial, Schacter’s lawyer, Joseph Kappy, said that his client did not believe the images he had viewed of adolescent boys wearing underwear and bathing suits were sexual in nature.

Corbett disagreed in strong terms.

“It’s painfully obvious” that Schacter is sexually attracted to young boys, the judge said. “Only a fool would think otherwise.”

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He said that only talent agents and those who seek sexual gratification would look at such images.

He told Schacter that, “You need to look into your heart. You’re not telling yourself the truth,” and counselled him to “deal with” his issues.

At his trial in June, the court heard from a male witness, now 47, who testified that he was sexually exploited by Schacter 30 or 40 times between the ages of 11 and 13, from approximately 1982 to 1985.

At the time, Schacter was a supply teacher at Yeshiva Yesodei HaTorah, an all-boys Orthodox Jewish school that the witness attended. Schacter was a substitute teacher for afternoon secular studies classes.

The court heard from two more witnesses in June. They were both in Grade 2 and seven years old when Schacter taught them secular studies at Eitz Chaim Schools, an Orthodox Jewish boys school in Toronto, respectively, in 1998 and 2001. Schacter was a teacher at the school between 1986 and 2004. He was later moved to the school’s library, where he helped students with their work.

One witness had testified that it took him a long time to come forward because he feared he would be “shunned” and “exiled” from the Orthodox Jewish community.

Schacter was also an office administrator, student supervisor and supply teacher at United Synagogue Day School (now Robbins Hebrew Academy) from 2004 to 2006.

He was a primary teacher's assistant in grades 1 and 2 at Pleasant Avenue Public School in 2004, and was a private tutor from 2009 until 2011.

Sentencing hearings on the child pornography charge and the sexual offences are scheduled for early in the new year.

Ron Csillag, Staff Reporter
