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By Ron Csillag, Staff Reporter - May 31, 2018 307 0

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Stephen Joseph Schacter

Stephen Schacter, a former teacher at two Toronto-area Jewish day schools, has been found guilty of possessing child pornography.

Schacter, 56, was found guilty on May 31 of one count of possessing child pornography, following a trial earlier this year, at which he had pleaded not guilty to the charge.

He showed no reaction to the judgment.

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The images Schacter had in his possession served “one purpose: to normalize and utilize the objectification of children as sexual objects for the purpose of sexual gratification,” said Justice Susan Chapman of the Ontario court of justice, in her ruling.

They were “not the type of photos a parent would have of their child,” she added. They were “sexualized images” and “clearly sexually exploitive.”

Schacter was arrested in December 2015, after he had viewed images on a public computer at the Lawrence Square employment and social services centre a few weeks earlier.

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A publication ban prevents the identification of witnesses at his trial.

The court heard in February from several witnesses that Schacter was seen viewing “inappropriate” images at the centre, causing some of them to become shocked and upset. Police were called, but Schacter left before they arrived.

A search of his residence yielded three USB storage devices, on which “numerous” images were found. Of those, 48 images were



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alleged to constitute child pornography. Thirty-seven of them were the focus of the judgment.

Chapman noted that Schacter's lawyer, Joseph Kappy, had argued that the Crown failed to prove that actual harm came to the children in the images in question. However, she said that images that meet the legal definition of child pornography are "inherently harmful."

Following the judgment, Kappy said he would challenge the mandatory minimum sentencing provisions for possessing child pornography, under the provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

That hearing is scheduled for Oct. 26. The Crown counsel in the case said she would be willing to consider arguments on sentencing at that date.

Schacter was a teacher at Eitz Chaim Schools between 1986 and 2004. He also worked with students in the school's library.

He was 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.

Separately, Schacter faces charges of sexual assault, sexual interference, sexual exploitation and gross indecency. The charges relate to events that took place between the 1980s and early 2000s.

His trial on those charges is scheduled to begin on June 11.

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Ron Csillag, Staff Reporter

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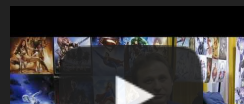
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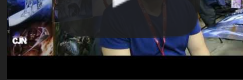
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