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School trespasser found guilty, but fine waived

BITTER SCHOOL BOARD RACE

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Although Board of Education candidate **Rafael Adorno was found guilty** of trespassing on school property, a Municipal Court judge on Monday waived a \$100 fine, saying that the defendant had not trespassed "for any bad purpose."

"I believe Mr. Adorno had no bad intent," Judge Philip M. Miller said while imposing a sentence that was lighter than the maximum penalties of 30 days in jail and a \$500 fine. "But I think he made a mistake."

Adorno was found guilty because he entered a back door at Barnegat High School on Jan. 22 to demonstrate that security needed to be improved. The school administration sent out an e-mail saying that an intruder had been "apprehended" and that the school had been locked down.

But much of that was overstated, according to school officials' testimony Monday. Police Officer Steven Tatur said he found Adorno on the second floor of the high school and greeted him cordially.

Adorno is a longtime community volunteer and a youth league football coach who had previously made speeches about improving security at the school.

Although he chose not to testify on his own behalf, Adorno was clearly upset by the verdict. He spoke to the judge before he was sentenced.

"I apologize to the people of Barnegat, the children and the parents" who might have been worried that their children were in danger when the first reports went out, Adorno told the judge.