

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE



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Subject: Ex-School Security Guard Convicted of Criminal Trespass
Date: December 19, 2018
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Defendant(s): Steven Hightower

Dec. 18, 2018

Ex-School Security Guard Convicted of Criminal Trespass

Newark — Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II, announced today that an Essex County jury has convicted Steven Hightower, 49, of Vauxhall of fourth degree criminal trespass following a trial before the Honorable Nancy Sivilli, Judge of the Superior Court.

According to Assistant Prosecutor Donato D'Angelo, who tried the case, beginning on September 5, 2016, and ending on September 18, 2016, Hightower knowingly entered the North Star Academy Charter School of Newark, Vailsburg Campus, without license or privilege to do so. At the time, Hightower had been working as a security guard at the school's West Side Park Campus.

Hightower was originally charged with third degree burglary and third degree theft for entering the Vailsburg Campus without authorization and taking approximately \$8,000 from the cash registers located inside the main office. He was observed on surveillance video entering the school. The jury acquitted Hightower of the burglary and theft charges, but convicted him of criminal trespass.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 25, 2019, before Judge Sivilli. Hightower, a former Rutgers University police officer, faces up to 18 months in state prison, a fine up to \$10,000, and is prohibited from owning, carrying, or purchasing a firearm.

"Brian Maher of North Star Academy demonstrated incredible courage by coming forward and providing detailed testimony, ensuring that Mr. Hightower would be held accountable for his actions," said Assistant Prosecutor D'Angelo.

"The Essex County Prosecutor's Office remains committed to seek justice, to serve justice, and to do justice," said Acting Essex County Prosecutor Stephens.

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