



## “I used to cry myself to sleep” – victim of former Jehovah’s Witness Barry Furlong speaks out after court ordeal

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By Will Frampton

A VICTIM of convicted sex offender Barry Furlong has urged other people who have suffered abuse to come forward.

Furlong, a grandfather and former ministerial servant in the Kinson Jehovah’s Witness community, was jailed for five years and three months last Monday after being found guilty of indecent assault and indecency with a child.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said the trial had been a frightening experience.

However, she added that it was worthwhile to see the 69-year-old pay for his crimes against her and three other young girls during the 1970s, '80s and '90s.

“The trial was the most terrifying thing I have ever done,” she said.

“You know you are telling the truth but you are sitting in front of 12 people who are making a judgement on everything you say.

“But I would say to anyone worried about coming forward about child abuse that you shouldn’t be frightened.

“He only got five years, but it is still some sort of punishment and we can move on now.

“All my life I wondered if I should have said something and I worry that other people may have suffered because I did not.”

The woman, who was a teenager at the time that she was indecently assaulted by Furlong, said that he was like a “big, jolly Father Christmas”.

“He did some very bad stuff, but I put it at the back of my mind, like having it locked away in a suitcase you don’t want to open,” she added.

“I used to cry myself to sleep at night; I used to pray to God ‘make it stop’.

“I would lie in bed with my eyes shut thinking that I had done something wrong.”

She said she came forward when she heard Furlong was being investigated for abusing another girl and praised the work of the police in bringing her case to the court.

“They were so determined, but never gave us false hope. They worked really hard,” she said, adding that she felt vindicated by the guilty verdicts which came from the trial.

Furlong, who denied all the charges against him, was found guilty of four counts of indecent assault and indecency with a child, but was also acquitted of four counts of rape and two of gross indecency with a child.

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