



Jehovah's Witness denies sex charges

By Jane Hunt [mailto:jane.hunt@eadt.co.uk] Tuesday, September 13, 2011
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A Suffolk Jehovah's Witness accused of sexually assaulting three girls tried to rape one of them while his wife was in hospital having their second child, it has been alleged.



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Paul Wood tried to force himself on the 14-year-old girl at his home in Sudbury and allegedly hit her in the face, Ipswich Crown Court heard.

As a result of the alleged blow the girl suffered a cut to her face and thought she may have lost consciousness, said Andrew Thompson, prosecuting.

Three years later in 2000 the girl and another alleged victim told Jehovah's Witnesses elders in west Suffolk about what Wood had allegedly done to them but it was left to the girls to decide if they wanted to go to the police.

"It was left very much to these two young people to decide if they wanted the police involved. The decision wasn't taken by the elders and as the girls didn't want to go to the police nothing was done in 2000," said Mr Thompson.

He said that at the time neither of the girls felt strong enough to take the matter further and thought that once the church elders knew of the allegations Wood would be ostracised and that safeguards would be put in place to stop it happening again.

Then in 2009 one of Wood's alleged victims discovered he was taking up a role with Jehovah's Witnesses in another part of the country that would bring him into contact with young women and decided to go to the police with her allegations.

Wood, 40, who now lives in Derbyshire, has denied nine offences of indecent assault and one of attempted rape on a girl aged between eight and 14 between 1991 and 1997, two offences of indecent assault on a girl aged 12 to 15 between 1992 and 1996 and six offences of indecent assault and three offences of rape between 1988 and 1996 on a girl aged between 10 and 17.

Mr Thompson told the court that after Wood appeared in court accused of sexually assaulting the first two alleged victims a third alleged victim contacted the police and made allegations against him after her sister saw a press report of the proceedings.

During police interviews after his arrest Wood denied all the allegations made against him.

In a video taped interview played to the court yesterday one of the alleged victims said she had been scared of Wood and described him as a "bully".

The case continues today (Tues).

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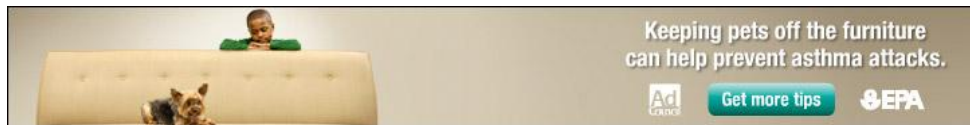
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