

# Jehovah's Witness elder jailed for raping a fellow worshipper and sexually abusing vulnerable schoolgirls

"Predator" Mark Sewell, 53, showed "not a shred of remorse" for his crimes, said the judge who sent him down.

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Paedophile Mark Sewell

A depraved Jehovah's Witness church elder who raped a fellow worshipper and abused vulnerable schoolgirls was today jailed for 14 years.

"Predator" Mark Sewell, 53, showed "not a shred of remorse" for his crimes, said the judge who sent him down.

The disgraced businessman was convicted of eight historic sex charges against four women following a three-week trial at Methyr Tydfil Crown Court.

Former Butlins holiday camp driver Sewell was today locked up for a total of 14 years at the same court.

## **Jehovah's Witness leader guilty of rape and seven other indecent assaults**

Addressing the heavy-set defendant directly, Judge Richard Twomlow told him: "You caused upset and distress to varying extents in the lives of our people.

"Two in particular suffered years of distress and a feeling of being ignored and disbelieved.

"You have showed not a shred of remorse."

Greying Sewell, of Porthkerry Road, Barry, frowned and occasionally closed his eyes as he followed proceedings via video link from Parc Prison in Bridgend.

At times Sewell, wearing a black short-sleeved polo shirt, was seen to breathe heavily.

He was last week found guilty by a jury of six sexual assaults against two young girls in the 120-strong Barry congregation more than 20 years ago.

Sewell was also convicted of raping a fellow churchgoer in an attack which left her knickers "shredded" and saw her fall pregnant.

Jurors also found him guilty of indecently assaulting another woman by rubbing his groin against her bottom as she made a cup of tea.

The burly defendant had denied nine counts spanning a period of more than eight years.

He was acquitted by jurors of one count of indecent assault, while Judge Twomlow directed the four men and eight women to return not guilty verdicts on a further three counts of indecent assault during the course of the trial.

The judge said Sewell had "groomed" his first victim and coerced her into keeping his campaign of assaults secret.

"She had the courage, though, recently to bring these matters forward again and at last has seen you brought to account for what you have done to her, which has had a tremendous effect on her and her family over the years," said Judge Twomlow.

Sewell abused his position of trust in the Jehovah's Witnesses to exploit and abuse her and another young girl, said the judge.

Sewell's suggestion that the woman he raped had "controlled" him was rejected "completely" by the judge, who told him: "You wanted a relationship with her and tried to persuade her to run off with you."

He later attacked her in what the judge called a "brief and violent rape", which he denied for years.

"The consequences of your denial have been very significant to the victim," said the judge, who added she had "had to live for years in the knowledge of what you did to her".

Describing the moment when the father of his third victim caught Sewell giving his schoolgirl daughter a topless massage, the judge said the defendant acted in a "typically aggressive, self-justifying and blustering" fashion by "telling him to get out even though you were in the wrong".

Indecently assaulting his final victim by rubbing himself against her was "part of a relentless attempt" to get her to accept his "lascivious suggestions" and have sex with him, the judge said.

Sewell was jailed for a total of 14 years.



Mark Sewell

For three counts of indecent assault against his first victim he was given three concurrent four-and-a-half-year jail terms, to run concurrently with one another.

For the offence of rape he was jailed for six and half years, to run consecutively.

For three indecent assaults against his third victims he will serve two-year jail terms which are concurrent to one another but consecutive to his other sentences.

For the final count of indecent assault he was jailed for a year, to run consecutively, meaning his total sentence was 14 years.

Sewell showed no reaction as the sentence was handed down.

He must also sign the sex offenders register for life and will be banned from ever working with children.

The judge also ordered him to pay a £120 victim surcharge.

When the trial opened the court heard how respected Jehovah's Witness Sewell used his "position of power" as an elder in the Barry congregation to "exploit and abuse" women and children.

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Prosecutor Sarah Waters said he had used his influence "to perpetrate such sexual abuse over a number of years for his own sexual gratification".

At the start of the trial she told the court: "He is a sexual predator that took opportunities available to him to satisfy his sexual desires.

"For example he would use his high position in the Jehovah's Witness congregation to act in a sexually inappropriate manner with women, being 'touchy-feely' and insisting that he kiss them on the lips."

During the trial witnesses described how he would kiss women and children on the lips using his tongue, while one victim recounted how he bribed her into kissing him by giving her alcohol.

Another victim told how Sewell would give her topless massages when she was just a teenage schoolgirl.

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