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Mother reveals torment as Jehovah's Witness is jailed for sexually abusing her daughter

By Plymouth Herald (http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/people/Plymouth_Herald/profile.html) | Posted: December 19, 2014

By SAM BLACKLEDGE Herald reporter



Comments (16)

A DEVASTATED mother has spoken of her pain after a Jehovah's Witness elder was jailed for the systematic sexual abuse of her young daughter.

David Dennis, aged 60, was handed a 12-year prison sentence after admitting 23 counts of indecent assault and sexual assault on a 13-year-old girl, committed over an eight-year period.

Now the mother of the girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, has revealed her anguish at discovering the extent of the abuse and her torment as she finally faced Dennis in court.

The mother first discovered what had been going on when her youngest daughter, now aged 19, confided in her 22-year-old sister that Dennis had touched her and made her perform sexual acts when she was aged 5 to 13.

The victim's sister passed this on to their mother in June 2013.

"She looked white as a sheet; she said 'I have got something to tell you'," the mother said.

"My head just started to spin. I just started saying 'Are you sure?' She said yes. She said 'I have been standing outside the door waiting. I just wanted to give you a few more minutes of normality.

"I was just devastated. She (the youngest daughter) came home. I looked at her and I said 'I am just so sorry.'"

The girls' mother agonised for more than a year over whether to alert the authorities.

"She is a very shy girl. She's not very confident," she said. "She wanted me to keep it quiet. She wasn't

ready for people to find out. I had to wait for her to be ready.

"It got to the point where he was living his life like nothing had happened and she was suffering badly from depression. She couldn't bear the fact that he was walking around and she was living in darkness.

"I tried to take my own life because I too suffered from depression. It just got too much, so she decided she wanted to go to the police.

"We didn't tell anybody we were going to the police. We just went and did it."

That decision set the legal process in motion, and last month Dennis appeared at Truro Crown Court where he pleaded guilty to a raft of offences.

Dennis blew a kiss to the victim and her mother in the public gallery as he admitted his crimes.

"I cried," the victim's mother said. "I just looked at him and I said 'Don't do that. Just don't.' He is very manipulative. He messes with your head."

The victim is now attempting to recover from the experience, but her mother fears she will never live a normal life again.

"She is bereft," she said. "She suffers from anxiety and insomnia and obsessive compulsive disorder.

"Since we found out she has been better. She has got the support of her family, but she is scarred terribly.

"It will haunt me to the grave. She doesn't want a relationship with anybody. She always wanted to be a midwife. Now she wants to disappear and run off with the Navy.

"She was so scared about coming forward because he was so well respected in the community. She didn't think anyone would believe her, but I never doubted her for a second. I couldn't believe it of him but I never doubted her."

Dennis, of Chawleigh Close, Gunnislake, will be registered as a sex offender for life and banned from working with children indefinitely.

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