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Scotland

Sex attacker tied up young girl and made her perform indecent act

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High Court: John Telfer was jailed for over two years for the sex offences.© Deadline

A sex attacker tied up a seven-year-old girl and forced her to perform indecent acts on him.

John Telfer was jailed for the offences he committed while he was a teenager 40 years ago.

The 55-year-old blindfolded one young girl before tying her wrists and made her perform a sexual act on him, the High Court in Edinburgh heard.

Telfer was around 16 years old at the time when he made another girl, who was around seven, perform an indecent act on him.

Lord Bannatyne was presented with a stack of letters and testimonials pleading for leniency for Telfer. But the judge said they were of limited value because most of those who spoke up for Telfer believed he was innocent and had been wrongly convicted.

He also rejected an argument from defence advocate Tony Graham, claiming that if Telfer had been caught back in the 1970s he would not have gone to prison.

Lord Bannatyne added: "These children were young and what happened to them was totally abhorrent and shouldn't happen to any child." He told Telfer: "I believe I would be failing in my public duty to impose anything other than a custodial sentence in the circumstances of this case."

Telfer, of Dalry, North Ayrshire, denied committing offences dating back to January 1974 at an address in Shotts, North Lanarkshire. But a jury found him guilty.

On Friday he was jailed for two years and three months for the sex offences. His lawyer Mr Graham said this was the only time he had been in trouble.

The lawyer described the offences as an aberration in Telfer's youth which had been followed by 40 years of behaviour as a worthwhile and widely-respected member of the community.

Passing sentence, Lord Bannatyne said he was also taking into account the evidence of one of Telfer's victims who told the court that her experience had not affected her badly.

Speaking to STV after the verdict, one of his victims explained how the abuse had affected her life.

"My family came into contact with his through the Jehovah's Witnesses. The abuse happened 38 years ago but it has always stayed with me. It led to me having a mental breakdown.

"I was happy he got sentenced at all today and that people believed me and that now he's sitting in jail. It is not going to change my life overnight but it is a start."

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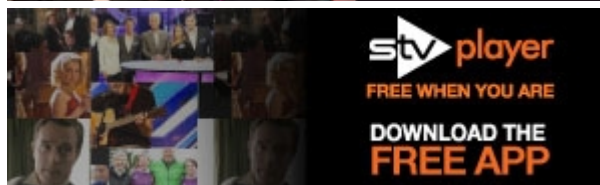
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