

National

Jehovah's Witness poisoner Brett Darren Mardon asks to be spared jailed for putting weed killer into milk of fellow worshipper

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👤 Court Reporter Ken McGregor The Advertiser

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Brett Darren Mardon outside the District Court after an earlier hearing.

A VENGEFUL Jehovah's Witness who repeatedly broke into the home of a fellow worshipper and poisoned his family's milk and fruit juice with weed killer has pleaded with a judge not to jail him.

Brett Darren Mardon, 44, has been [found guilty of multiple counts of attempting to create a risk of harm, trespassing and theft over the crimes between March and October 2011.](#)

In his victim impact statement read to the court today, his victim, church committee member Ben Anthonysz said he lived with the fear of the long term health problems the weed killer may have caused him and his family.

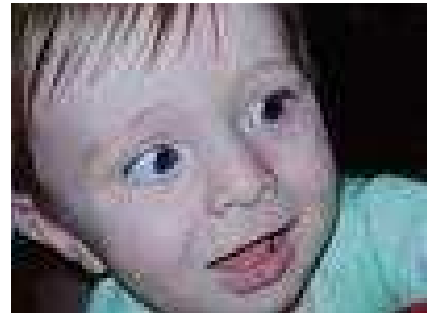
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"My wife and two young boys felt like we were under attack and were terrorised for a period of seven months," he said.

"The covert nature of the attacks meant that we had no idea — was someone trying to make us sick? Was someone trying to kill us? We had to assume the worse."

Mr Anthonysz said he and his wife had disagreed with how to catch the culprit without further putting their family at risk.

"We begun to suspect, due to the timing of the attacks, that there was a kind of connection there with our congregation," he said.

"This made us socially withdrawn and suspicious of our friends.

"It makes me angry that Mr Mardon had some kind of issue with me, one that he did not have the courage to discuss with me, and I was therefore unaware of, and yet he chose to target my wife and children who were in no way connected with his issues."

During his trial, prosecutors told the court Mardon had injected milk, apple juice and other liquids in their refrigerator with glyphosate.

They claimed Mardon's use of the weed killer was motivated by revenge, as he blamed Mr Anthonysz for his excommunication from the faith and the end of his marriage.

Giving evidence, Mardon said his goal was to "emotionally disturb" Mr Anthonyysz, who he believed had excommunicated him and would not let him return to the congregation.

Mr Anthonyysz said Mardon still hadn't accepted responsibility for his crime.

"During the trial, instead of showing any remorse or taking any responsibility, Mr Mardon attempted to paint himself as the victim and in so doing he made public comments, some of them picked up by the media, about me and the judicial processes off Jehovah's Witnesses that were a distortion of the truth to the point of slander."

Defence lawyer Andrew Culshaw today said Mardon had been [isolated, undermined and ignored by other church members, which caused the break down of his marriage and the onset of depression](#).

"My client's description of going to church and being isolated by the people he saw everyday was cruel," he said.

Mr Culshaw said Mardon had been "emotionally tortured" by the congregation but "unreservedly accepts" that what he did was wrong.

He asked District Court Judge Rauf Soulio to suspend any jail sentence imposed.

"Incarceration would be very difficult for him given the sheltered life he has led within the Jehovah's Witness community," he said.

Prosecutors, however, argued Mardon's crimes were premeditated and repeated acts that endangered the health of not only Mr Anthonyysz but also his children and, therefore, immediate jail time was warranted.

Judge Soulio will sentence Mardon next month.

Originally published as [Jehovah's poisoner asks to be spared jail](#)

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