

## East Lancs woman in double sex ordeal claim

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By Peter Magill

A SCHOOLGIRL who confided that she was being sexually abused by a Jehovah's Witness was then repeatedly molested by the man she had turned to for help, a court heard.

The 12-year-old was 'infatuated' with Eugene Nugent, who was in his early 20s, and 'followed him around like a puppy', jurors at Burnley Crown Court were told.

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But after the girl, a member of a Jehovah's Witness family in Haslingden, told Nugent that a senior member of the congregation had been sexually assaulting her, he also began abusing her, the court heard.

Nugent, now 53, is accused of inciting her to commit sex acts at his home, the garage where he worked, near Grane Reservoir and in a shed.

Prosecutor Sara Dodd said that on one occasion, while his wife was out of the house, he also had full sex with the girl, despite her telling him to stop halfway through. She later told one of her sisters about what had happened.

Nugent, of Cobden Street, Hapton, has denied having sexual intercourse with a girl aged under 13 and seven charges of indecency with a child between July 1983 and July 1984.

The prosecutor said the alleged offences only came to light in May 2013 after the partner of the woman, now in her 40s, confronted Nugent. Police were later informed.

The court heard when Nugent was arrested in July last year by investigating officers he refused to answer any questions but handed over a prepared statement denying there had been any sexual activity between the pair.

Miss Dodd told jurors the alleged victim had not come forward previously out of loyalty to Nugent's wife and because she believed what happened 'was her fault'.

(Proceeding)

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