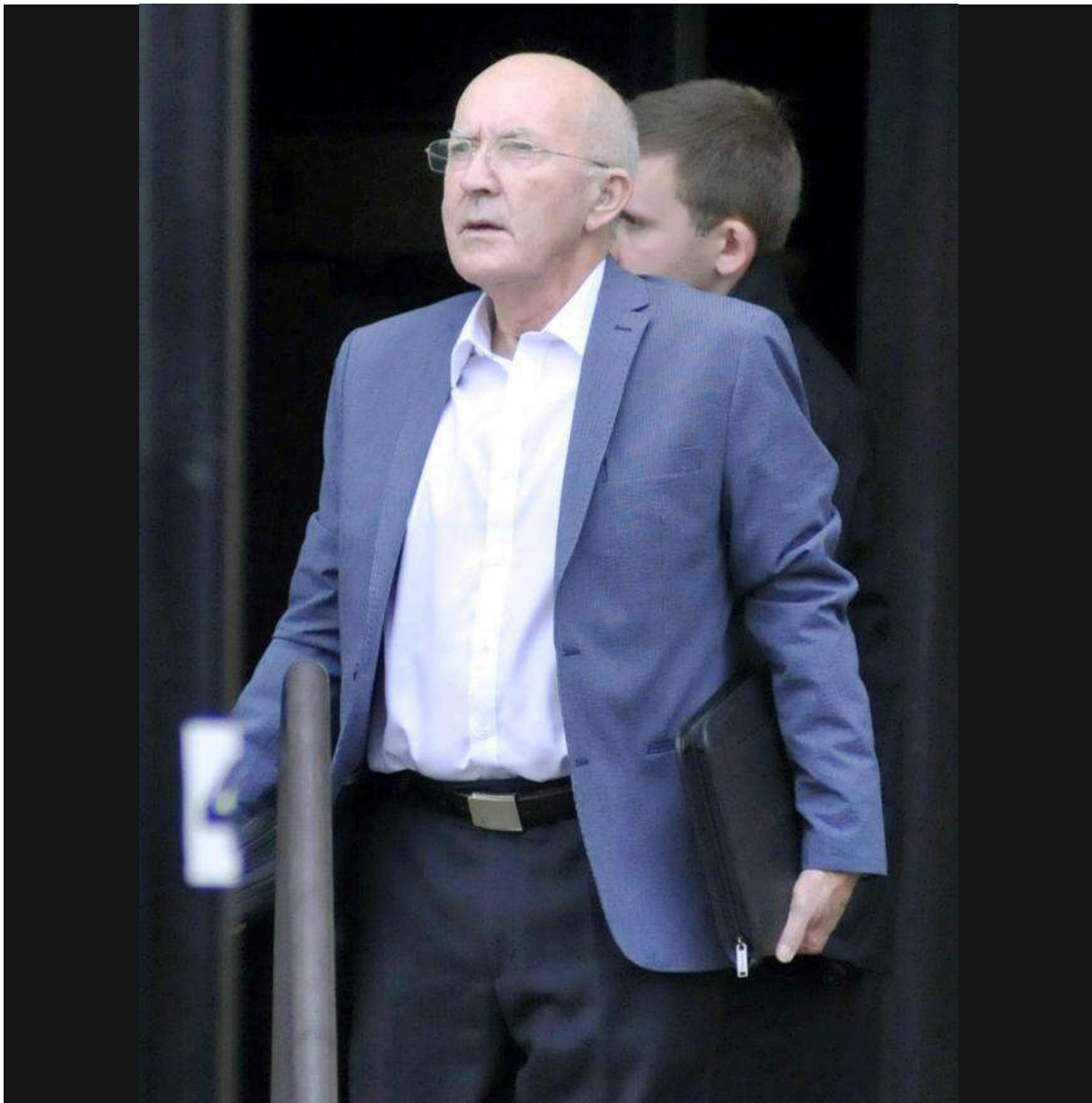


# The Bolton News

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## Former bingo caller Edward Hill cleared of raping and sexually assaulting schoolgirl

*By Gayle McBain*



Edward Hill

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**A FORMER bingo caller accused of raping and sexually assaulting a schoolgirl has walked free from court.**

Edward Hill silently mouthed the words “thank you” to the Bolton Crown Court jury as he was found not guilty of all charges.

Family members hugged in the public gallery as 70-year-old Mr Hill left the dock a free man.

Outside number three court an emotional Mr Hill said: “It is a relief it is all over because the truth is finally out.”

Flanked by his wife and sons, Mr Hill thanked his family, friends and neighbours for standing by him through what he described as a “nightmare 18 months”.

He said: “They have all supported me throughout this. No-one who knows me has ever doubted me.”

Mr Hill, who had stood as a Liberal Democrat in local elections in Bolton, had always denied the charges — a total of four charges of indecent assault and four charges of rape.

His alleged victim made her claims to the police last year after having counselling sessions and reading reports about other victims, the court had heard.

She had been between the ages of 13 and 17, in the early 1980s, when she said the offences took place.

She had told the jury: “I did think to myself that other people are being heard now and it might be all right going to court and dealing with it. It was time for justice.”

The woman, now in her 40s, had told the court that Mr Hill had tried to hypnotise her and began sexually abusing her when she was aged 11.

She said Mr Hill, who lives in Exford Drive, Brightmet, had touched her sexually and, on one occasion, gave her his underpants to wear.

She said he had invited her into his bedroom to listen to conversations around the world on his radio — then raped her on his bed.

Under cross examination by Phillip Andrews, defending, she said she had not complained at the time saying: “I was a child at the end of the day.”

Summing up the case on Tuesday, Judge Davies said Mr Hill, a former school governor, was a man of good character, with no previous convictions.

When interviewed, his wife, Elaine, described her husband as “kind, caring and funny”, adding: “He is my protector.”

<https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/11524583.former-bingo-caller-edward-hill-cleared-of-raping-and-sexually-assaulting-schoolgirl/>