

The Comet

Judge's attack on father in sex abuse case

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A JUDGE has halted a trial in which seven members of the same family were accused of long term sexual abuse.

But he also blasted the father of the family in a stinging attack, saying he was satisfied that some, if not all, of his children had been subjected to some form of abuse at his hands.

It had been alleged that one girl had been assaulted by her mother, father, four brothers and an uncle, starting when she was six years old, her younger sister by her mother, father and two brothers and two other younger sisters by their father.

The jury at Luton Crown Court were told that the uncle is a self-confessed paedophile and that the father on trial had previously been jailed for indecently assaulting some of his sons.

The seven defendants, aged between 22 and 53, were all originally from Letchworth GC.

They denied a total of 34 charges which included rape, attempted rape, indecent assault, cruelty and intimidation dating back to 1995.

On Friday after four weeks of evidence Judge John Bevan QC directed the jury to find the defendants not guilty of all charges.

He said the main complainant's evidence could not be relied upon and her sister's evidence had been contaminated because she had been told what her older sister had said and "parroted" it.

He also said medical evidence did not support the girl's account that she had been raped repeatedly on a weekly basis for years and years. Her hymen was still intact.

Her allegations had come out in "dribs and drabs", some while she was in psychiatric care, undergoing counselling and on medication.

He said she was a very damaged child who had also made admittedly false allegations of rape against two other men.

But then he launched a tirade at the father.

He said: "What I have heard in this infinitely depressing trial satisfies me that some, if not all, of your children have been subjected to some form of abuse at your hands, whether physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual.

"Your daughter is such damaged goods now that her evidence is worthless. Social services have had a full time commitment dealing with the wreckage of your family and it is fanciful to preclude that a substantial part of that blame does not lie with you.

"If you stopped to think for a moment about your behaviour as a parent you would be ashamed of yourself. I strongly suspect you are not."

But the uncle was sentenced for two charges of indecently assaulting the girl involved in the trial and for possessing 4,064 indecent images of children on his computer. He was jailed for 27 months.

He admitted to police that he had manipulated situations with the girl so that he could touch her for his own sexual gratification.

He said: "I am a paedophile, I am not going to deny that. I have mostly kept myself in check."

He had been convicted in 1977 for indecently assaulting an eight-year-old girl.

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