

**Breaking News.ie Monday 10 May 2010**

## **Elderly man jailed for sexually abusing daughters:**

A 79-year-old man has been jailed for two and a half years for sexually abusing his two young daughters during the 1970s and 1980s.

The Dublin man, who cannot be named to protect the identity of his daughters, was found guilty by a jury at the Central Criminal Court last February of rape, buggery and 19 charges of indecent assault against one daughter and 25 counts of indecent assault against another between 1975 and 1981.

The jury returned the verdicts of guilty on all counts after just over an hour's deliberation on day 10 of the trial.

The eldest complainant outlined in her victim impact statement how she had lost her family as a result of the abuse and had difficulties in her marriage. She said she is still dealing with the shame and anger that are a legacy of incest.

The younger complainant said trying to deal with the abuse had been like "like burying rubbish under the ground but it keeps bubbling to the surface." She described her father as "evil" and said he had caused devastation within the family. She said home was not a safe place for her as a child and held the threat of violence.

She described how as a child she had spent as much time as she could in other people's homes and would feel isolated when she saw how happy and secure the families were.

She said it had been difficult to be in the same room as her father during the trial and he had showed them no sign of compassion.

Mr Justice George Birmingham said the accused man's protestations of innocence had been rejected by the jury. He noted the accused had sought to "bargain with the court" by sending it a letter saying if he received a suspended sentence there would be no appeal.

He said the seriousness of the offence and the prolonged impact it has had on the lives of his victims had emerged in the victim impact statements outlined to the court.

Mr Justice Birmingham said he had to take into account the age and frailty of the accused and he had to be conscious of the fact that any sentence imposed would be a significant portion of the remainder of the man's life.

He imposed concurrent sentences totalling two and a half years, ordered two years post release supervision and ordered that his name be placed on the sex offenders' register.

Garda Nuala Burke told Mr Paul McDermott SC, prosecuting, that the elder girl was abused between the ages of eight and 11, while the younger girl was abused by her father between the age of five and 11.

The accused man was arrested in September 2007 and denied the allegations. He continued to maintain his innocence throughout the trial and gave evidence in his own defence. He has no previous convictions.

Defence counsel, Mr Blaise O'Carroll SC, handed in a letter of apology from the accused to the court regarding the last letter the accused had conveyed to Mr Justice Birmingham. He said the accused was in frail health and had problems with his heart.

Mr O'Carroll said the accused had "deteriorated in an extraordinary way since the verdict" and submitted that jail was taking a heavy toll on him.

He asked the court to take into account the amount of time that had elapsed since the offences.

"As a result of what happened his life and what little of it is left has been destroyed," said Mr O'Carroll.

He asked the court to leave the accused light at the end of the tunnel and consider a suspended sentence.