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'That pot-bellied rapist stole my childhood': Victim relives ordeal after monster who attacked her as a ten-year-old is finally locked up 30 years later

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A monster dubbed the 'pot-bellied rapist' by his ten-year-old victim has finally been jailed - almost three decades after his horrific crime.

Twisted Michael Acey, then 21, attacked the 4st girl as she walked home from school in Hull in 1984, but despite extensive enquiries at the time, he was not found.

A cold case review finally found a DNA match and yesterday Acey was jailed for ten years at Hull Crown Court.



Vile: Michael Acey, now 49, has finally been caught after attacking a 4st schoolgirl as she walked home from school in 1984

In a victim impact statement, the girl he attacked said Acey 'stole my childhood', leaving her needing tranquillisers. She said she is still terrified of strangers at the age of 37.

The Recorder of Hull and the East Riding, Judge Michael Mettyear, who also ordered Acey to register as a sex offender for life, told him: 'You stole the childhood of a young vulnerable girl. You not only stole her childhood, you blighted the rest of her life.'

'The sympathy of the court goes out to her as does the hope that today's hearing will help, to some extent at least, the healing process.'

The judge pointed out that at the time of the attack, Acey was 21, while the girl was tiny for her age, weighing less than 4 stone.

'It was for her a devastating attack,' the judge said.



Horrific act: The scene where the 10-year-old was dragged into bushes and raped on the former Withernsea Railway line, at Greatfield

He pointed out that foul Acey had then 'tried to rub salt in the wound' by telling his traumatised victim she might have a baby as a result.

'She was absolutely distraught at what had happened, her physical injuries were unpleasant and she continues to bear the mental scars of what you did.

'A very substantial police investigation at the time failed to discover who it was and you must have thought in your own mind over all these years you had got away with it.'

In a haunting victim impact statement, Acey's victim said: 'Since that day, every single day my thoughts keep being brought back to what that man did to me.

'I have spent the majority of my life being prescribed anti-depressant medication and at one time my mood level was so low I made a genuine attempt to end my own life.



Traumatic: The path in Hull where the terrible crime took place

'He stole my childhood. After my attack I had to keep the lights on I was so scared of the dark even though the incident happened in daytime.

'I could not sleep, I would not sleep until I could no longer stay awake. I would black out and this would then trigger a nightmare that was described as being similar to a fit.

'I would fight and scream and thrash about as if this attack was happening again. It took up to three people to restrain me and calm me down.

'After these nightmares that is when I was prescribed tranquillisers. I was unable to be left alone in the quiet, my parents had to make a noise to reassure me someone was with me.'

She said her whole family had been affected by the attack, saying: 'We could no longer live in the house we did and I had to change my school it was so close to the attack, where it happened.

'I was unable to leave the house alone. Every unknown male of the relevant age made me anxious, I was worried if that man had been my attacker.



Tragic: The life of the victim, now 37, has been blighted by the attack, which left her needing tranquillisers

'As I grew older I found it difficult, the mental scars were still there. In my adult life I found it hard to trust the partners I have had.

'I am overprotective of my own children. Even to this day I cannot walk the street near a stranger.'

Adding that she wanted to be in court to see justice done, she said: 'He'll never suffer as much as I am. No court can take as much from him as he took from me.'

Philip Evans, prosecuting, told how the girl had visited a friend's home after school and at about 5pm, she set off along a rough track to go home when Acey suddenly grabbed her, putting his hands around her stomach.

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Ignoring her cries, he carried her into some bushes nearby. He threatened to kill her before raping her and telling her she might have a baby.

In 2010, her attacker's DNA was extracted from her dress and coat and that eventually led to Acey, who when arrested immediately began to shake and cry.

At the police station he said: 'That poor woman, that poor woman, I have destroyed her life.'

The judge accepted that Acey, who is registered disabled because of a spinal condition and appeared in the dock on crutches, was now genuinely remorseful but said he should be for such 'shameful, disgusting behaviour'.

Following the sentencing, Det Supt Dena Fleming, head of Humberside Police's major incident team, said the investigation was one of the first to be reviewed in Operation Fox which carries out cold case reviews, adding: 'It has taken two years but we have caught the man responsible.'

The breakthrough came after it was established that forensic scientists had kept samples from the 1984 attack and new techniques would enable DNA to be extracted. But it was then compared against the national DNA database without success.

Acey had committed previous offences of dishonesty and was probably on bail for robbery at the time of the rape, but it was long before such a database.

Officers extended their search to those suspected at the time, but again there was no match.

'But I was sure whoever was responsible must be from that area to know the track involved,' Det Supt Fleming said.

Intelligence led to a family in the area and after a close familial link, Acey was approached and agreed to give his DNA - which was a match.

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