

DNA EVIDENCE CATCHES MAN WHO ABUSED GIRLS

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A COURT heard detectives managed to solve a string of kidnappings of little girls in the 1980s and 1990s thanks to new DNA techniques.

Paedophile David Bryant, 65, of Baycliff, was due to be sentenced yesterday at Newcastle Crown Court for four terrifying, separate attacks on victims in Hampshire and Tyneside.

However, the sentencing has been adjourned for further reports.

The grandfather admitted four counts of kidnap and four counts of sexual assault after cold-case detectives made a DNA link to catch him, 30 years after he first struck.

Mark Giuliani, prosecuting, said: "A familiar feature of these offences is how the defendant targeted young girls out playing near their homes. Perhaps it is a sad reflection on society in the 21st century that such behaviour is greatly curtailed.

"Children have been effectively robbed of part of their childhood."

The court heard Bryant lived in Saudi Arabia between committing the offences in the south and those in the north east.

He had been convicted of three sex offences against women between 1975 and 1984, Mr Giuliani said.

His offending against children was becoming more serious, culminating in the last abduction which lasted 17 hours and sparked a major police response.

In the first case in the early 1980s he grabbed a girl aged five who was playing outside her Hampshire home from under the nose of her mother.

The girl's mum had popped into their house to get drinks for the children, the court heard. When she returned, her daughter had vanished.

Moments later a couple reported they had found her and a man had run away.

He had committed a sex act, leaving DNA evidence on her which would only prove useful decades later.

The following year a three-year-old was snatched as she played with other children in Southampton. Bryant had offered to show her some puppies, took her to woods and sexually abused her.

Speaking as an adult, she said: "When I hear an ice cream van playing its music I am left with chills all over my body. I am left remembering what happened to me at a very young age."

In the mid-1990s a girl aged five was playing outside her home on a May evening in Newcastle when she was separated from her family. When her frantic mother discovered her missing a search of the local area proved fruitless and the police were called.

The girl was found 36 miles away in Darlington, County Durham three hours later.



DNA LINK: David Bryant sexually abused four girls in the 1980s and 1990s

A local taxi driver spotted her half-dressed and alone on the streets and took her to the police station. She also had been abused.

Later that year a four-year-old from Newcastle was abducted as she walked 30 yards to a friend's house. Bryant later admitted he took her to a caravan in Cumbria. He dumped her in Darlington the next day.

The former soldier abused her then washed her in the bath to get rid of DNA.

Mr Giuliani said Hampshire Police detectives began a cold-case review of the sex attacks and through DNA advances, tracked down the predator, having eliminated three of his male relatives from their inquiries.

The Hampshire offences had already been linked to Tyneside abductions.

Sentencing was adjourned to allow further reports into Bryant's state of mind to be prepared.

Judge James Goss, the Recorder of Newcastle, told Bryant he hoped to pass sentence in a week. He said: "I am sincerely hoping it will not be long before this case can be completed."

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