

May 9, 2016

Melanie Road murder: Man jailed for life 32 years after killing



A man who sexually assaulted and stabbed a girl 32 years ago has been given a life sentence for her murder.

Melanie Road, 17, was attacked as she made her way home from a nightclub in Bath in June 1984.

Christopher Hampton, who changed his plea to guilty as his murder trial was due to begin at Bristol Crown Court, must serve a minimum term of 22 years.

Hampton, 64, was caught in 2015 after police linked DNA from Melanie's clothing to his daughter.

Stabbed 26 times

She had been arrested aged 41 in 2014 for a "minor incident" and her DNA profile was taken, leading the police to her father.

Sentencing Hampton, Mr Justice Popplewell told him the attack had been "lengthy and brutal" and "for your own sexual gratification".

"She was repeatedly stabbed - 26 times in all - with a sharp-edged knife, causing four-inch wounds.

"Eight of the wounds were to her breasts.

"You first stabbed her while she was on her feet on the street on her way home, before chasing her some 30 metres round the corner to the cul-de-sac where she died."



Following the attack, Hampton married his second wife and had a daughter, Amy, and stepson Darren with her.

"You married and had a child and lived your family life for all those years knowing the extreme misery you must have inflicted on your victim's family but you were too callous and cowardly to put an end to their heartache," the judge told Hampton.

"You will very likely die in prison."

On the night of her death, Melanie had gone out with her boyfriend and friends to the Beau Nash, a nightclub in Kingston Parade.

She left the club in the early hours of 9 June and was last seen alive by her friends a short time later in Broad Street.

A milkman found her body, which was lying in a pool of blood.

Kate Brunner QC told the court that Hampton, from Fishponds in Bristol, subjected Melanie to a "vicious and sustained" sexual assault then partially redressed her, possibly after she had died.

Three decades a later, a familial match was identified between Hampton's daughter's DNA and the DNA taken from Melanie's body and clothing.

"Christopher Hampton's DNA was found to match the DNA from semen staining from the fly and crotch of Melanie Road's trousers."

Melanie's mother Jean said when she first saw Hampton in court she thought he was "a monster".

"I then realised his wife and daughter were sitting behind me - both with blonde hair like Melanie," said Mrs Road.

"It hurts beyond repair - how can he do that to somebody and then live with people and with them not knowing?"



In a witness impact statement, Melanie's older sister Karen told the court: "You would think that nothing could be worse than being told that your little sister has been sexually attacked and brutally murdered... what is worse is no-one being charged with her murder.

"For 32 years this evil person has not owned up to this horrific crime.

"I want to be able to remember her life instead of focussing on her death. She is my sister, she is a person, she deserves to be remembered for herself."

An impact statement from Melanie's brother Adrian Road said: "When they told me, I cried, uncontrollably, I cried.

"My six-year-old daughter asked me "Daddy, why are you crying?" I had to tell her, "The man who killed Aunty Melanie, my little sister a long time ago, has now been caught, so we are all safe."

Directly addressing Hampton, Mr Road said: "You killed Melanie, you raped her, you mutilated her, and you chose to abandon her, you abandoned her when she was dying, our little sister Melanie.

"She was a lovely girl and I loved her."