



PEDOPHILE ROLF HARRIS JAILED FOR FIVE YEARS, NINE MONTHS FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF FOUR GIRLS

CHARLES MIRANDA IN LONDON NEWS CORP AUSTRALIA JULY 04, 2014

Tristan Fewings/Getty Images. Harris jailed 5 years and nine months

Last moments of freedom ... Artist and television personality Rolf Harris arrives at Southwark Crown Court to face sentencing on 12 counts of indecent assault in London. ENTERTAINER Rolf Harris will spend the next five years and nine months of his life behind bars for sexually assaulting four teenage girls over a 20-year period. In the conclusion to his dramatic trial at which the 84-year-old was branded a sinister pervert who used his fame to indecently grope and groom girls for abuse, he was told he would not be eligible for parole until half that sentence is served.



Judge Nigel Sweeney gave lengthy reasons for his sentencing and said the historic offences under today standards would have him jailed for life for the assaults. He then gave a sentence for each charge to be served consecutively and concurrently totalling five years and nine months of which he will serve at least half with the second half to be served at home if he is of good behaviour.

His defence counsel had earlier in the hearing appealed for leniency on the grounds of his age and general poor health, detailed privately in a doctor's report handed to the judge but not made public. Harris is initially to be sent to the imposing Wandsworth Jail in London's south west for eight to 10 days for assessment before being moved to a 'Category C' minimum security prison facility in the country. Judge Sweeney told a packed but hushed Southwark Crown Court Harris had been a popular entertainer of international standing for 50 years and an artist of renown.

But he said a jury had found after an eight week trial he was a "sex offender" from 1969 to 1986 and his actions had had a "significant adverse effect" on the four lives of victims aged 8 to 19, whom he took advantage of using his celebrity status. Judge Sweeney said Harris "clearly took a thrill out of it" but they suffered including one suffering "severe psychological injury" who he had "fancied" since she was the age of 13 in 1978.



Last walk of freedom ... Rolf Harris, centre, accompanied by his daughter Bindi, background left and niece Jenny, centre right, arrives at Southwark Crown Court to be sentenced. Picture: Dominic Lipinski. He recognised Harris had been stripped of his honours but "you have no one to blame but yourself".

Judge Sweeney highlighted the nature of the sex offences but noting the age of each victim and Harris' age at the corresponding time of the assault. One girl was eight years old when he was 39, another 16 when he was 48, a third aged 15 when he was 50 and the last 15 when he was 56. Judge Sweeney told him: "Rolf Harris, the sentence I pass upon you in total is one of five years and nine months imprisonment. "Unless released earlier, you will serve half that sentence when you will be released on licence for the remainder of your sentence.



On his way out photographers try to take a picture of the veteran entertainer Rolf Harris, at Southwark Crown Court in London. Picture: Bogdan Maran. "Should you break the terms of that licence, including by commission of further offences, you will be liable to recall."

The judge told the court he did not feel it was appropriate to order Harris to pay compensation to his victims, but said: "You will, however, pay the costs of the prosecution in such sum as may be agreed or assessed in due course." "You clearly got a thrill from committing some of these offences," he said. "Your reputation lies in ruins... You have no one to blame but yourself."

He also said he has "no doubt" his abuse of one of the victims is to blame for her alcoholism. He added that Harris caused severe psychological harm to his daughter's childhood friend, who he abused. Harris' wife Alwen did not attend court but his daughter Bindi Nicholls and other family members and close friends were there for support as were his two PR agents and manager, who said they were attending to "manage the court of public opinion". Prosecutors read the harrowing impact statements to the court from the four victims.



Facing his fate ... Rolf Harris accompanied by his niece Jenny at Southwark Crown Court in London. Picture: Tristan Fewings. One was from a now 49-year-old woman, who had been abused by Harris since the age of 13 until she was 29 years, who said she had suffered terrible mental trauma and left her permanently "feeling worthless".

She said the effects of his abuse had left her feeling "dirty, grubby and disgusting" and suffering panic attacks and anxiety for much of her life. She began drinking from the age of 14 years and later became a full-blown alcoholic and as a direct result of his abuse her dreams to live a successful happy life with a family of her own were never realised.



Arriving by car ... Artist and television personality Rolf Harris at Southwark Crown Court. Picture: Ben A. Pruchnie. Even during the trial she was distraught as Harris tried to paint her as a liar and tried to humiliate her. "I think he thought he could make me crumble like I use to but I am better than I was," she said in her read statement, adding she had been "dry" since 2000.

Prosecutor Sasha Wass QC told the court that the abuse of Bindi's friend, "was an abusive relationship that spanned over a period of 16 years". She said the victim came from "a loving, kind, affectionate and affluent family" and "had no reason whatsoever to take the tragic course that her life took as a result of the abuse that she suffered at the hands of Rolf Harris".



Tonya Lee ... one of Rolf Harris's victims who gave testimony against him. Tonya Lee, another victim who waived her right to anonymity, said in her statement Harris robbed her ability to feel safe and she had been in a constant state of anxiety who had seen her unable to form relationships and saw her three children removed by the State from her care.



"What Mr Harris took from me was my very essence," the now 43-year-old said. A small smile Rolf Harris arrives at Southwark Crown Court in London. Picture: Niklas Halle'n.

Harris' youngest victim was eight years old in 1969 when she sought his autograph and was groped in the crutch twice by Harris instead described how her childhood innocence was robbed.

She had been unable to trust men and as a teenager was angry and confused. The last victim said she had always felt shamed what he had done to her as a 14-year-old waitress at a social function. Harris, dressed in a light grey suit and bright multi-patterned coloured tie and having with him in the dock a small stripy suitcase anticipating being jailed straight away, listened intently but showed no emotion.

Harris' defence lawyer Sonia Woodley QC tendered two medical reports and earlier appealed for a lighter jail sentence given a range of health complaints and Harris' age. She said he was also his sick wife's carer and thus the impact on her would also be great. "With the exception of (Bindi's friend) all the encounters were brief and they were opportunistic rather than predatory," she told the court.



Holding hands ... Rolf Harris with his niece Jenny at Southwark Crown Court. Picture: Tristan Fewings

"I have to concede that there was a breach of trust which is an aggravating feature in this case."

She added the last claim of abuse was in 1994 so "It means that for the last 20 years he has led an upright life".



Leaving for prison ... photographers try to take a picture of the veteran entertainer Rolf Harris, at Southwark Crown Court in London. Picture: Bogdan Maran.

She then listed various charities he had been involved with over the years. She also said she had received 3 lever arch folders worth of letters and two bags worth of cards from members of the public supporting Harris.

Ms Woodley said he was already on borrowed time due to his health and age and had been stripped of various honours. He is already on borrowed time ... every day, every month in prison is going to shorten his life," she said. At the start of sentencing he was asked to stand and was asked "are you Rolf Harris?" to which he loudly said "I am".



After saying goodbye ... Bindi Harris leaves Southwark Crown Court in south London. Picture: Niklas Halle'n "Such has been the national interest in Britain, dozens of members of the public queued for an hour outside Court 2 of Southwark Crown Court to witness the sentencing of a man who has been described as a national living treasure who had been at the top of the entertainment, music and art worlds for five decades.

Court staff had to send the public and excess media to a spare court to watch proceedings on closed circuit TV. Earlier in the week Harris was warned he was likely to receive a jail sentence on the basis he had been found guilty by a jury of all 12 counts of indecent assault over a 20 year period from 1968 to 1986. One member of the jury returned to court yesterday to watch the sentencing. The court was told, and the jury accepted, Harris first assaulted a 13-year-old in 1978 while she travelled on holidays with the Harris family including her best friend Bindi to Hawaii and Australia. The court heard Harris groomed the girl and would go on to assault her another half a dozen times including at her house in England to the point she became submissive to his sexual advances until she was 29 years of age.



His mugs hot ... Rolf Harris's photograph taken by police when he was arrested.



Rolf's wife ... Alwen Hughes, who was not at court for his sentencing. Picture: Matthew Lloyd

He was also convicted of assaulting a 12-year-old autograph hunter in 1969, a waitress aged about 14 in Cambridge and aspiring 15-year-old actress Tonya Lee from Sydney who was visiting London in 1986 with her performing troupe when she was assaulted two by Harris at a Greenwich pub in South East London. She went onto to suffering an eating disorder from the trauma of the assaults carried out brazenly at the table she and her troupe were eating at and later outside the women's toilets.

The court heard from six other women who had been assaulted as girls in Australia, New Zealand and Malta but outside the UK jurisdiction for prosecution. But there are more than a dozen other women who have also made claims against the star from across Australia and the UK. Those claims are still being reviewed and no decision made on whether they can or will be prosecuted.



Judgment day ... Rolf Harris avoids reporters by travelling by boat as he faces jail for indecent assaults. Picture: ITV/Twitter

Lawyers are looking to move on the Harris estate, said to include a \$7 million River Thames waterfront home in the village of Bray and \$19.9 million in savings and other assets.

Harris' defence team since he was arrested in 2012 could have cost more than at \$1 million including a barrister and a junior, three to four solicitors, two PR agents, four body guards, a manager for the entire eight week trial, another team of lawyers for his daughter Bindi, lawyers for his numerous pre-trial hearings and a separate law firm to fire warning letters at both British and Australia media outlets if they besmirched Harris' name.

PROSECUTION DROPS HARRIS CHILD PORN CHARGES

His sentence comes after prosecutors decided to drop four charges the entertainer was facing related to possessing child pornography. Prosecutor Sasha Wass QC told the court in light of the 12 convictions on the more serious indecent assault charges, the Crown Prosecution Service had decided not to pursue the child porn charges. They said it was no longer in the public's interest to have another trial and issued a notice of discontinuance.

The four charges, found on the 84-year-old's computer when police raided his home in 2012, were to have formed part of the indictment with the other 12 charges but were "severed" to form a separate case because they were seen as too incriminating. Harris' lawyers had then moved to have the charges dismissed; the matter was part heard before the Harris trial on the other 12 charges began.

In pre-trial hearing at Southwark Crown Court, it was heard Harris had allegedly attempted to erase pornographic images of young girls he had downloaded on his computer to protect his reputation and save his family embarrassment. With names like "Russian Virgins", "My Little Nieces", "Youngest Teen Porn", "Little Vag***s", and "Tiny Teen P**sy", prosecutors told court Harris was deliberately searching Internet porn sites in 2012 for under age images.

One file called "watch my girlfriend" featured two girls with a teddy bear in the foreground while another deleted file, later retrieved, featured just a girl's genitals the development of which, analysed by medical experts, suggested she was under 13 years. Another was of a boy and girl in a pose that he allegedly downloaded and deleted four times and another, titled "bravo erotica" of two girls with their vests pulled up over their breasts

Their existence was, the court heard, an example of the pattern of Harris interest in children. But his lawyers claimed the downloading was accidental, there were another 328 images involving adult pornography and there was no proof the 30 images from the sites actually involved children with the "models", suspected to be from Eastern Europe, just as likely to be 18-year-olds.

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/national/pedophile-rolf-harris-jailed-for-five-years-nine-months-for-sexual-abuse-of-four-girls/story-fni6ulvf-1226978362650?nk=6c32fb6d0608b6316dfeb27bb0888f63>