

Sex Abuse Victim Comes Forward After 16 Years

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EDWARDSVILLE - A sex abuse victim came forward 16 years after the fact in order to save the second potential victim from the same fate, a judge was told Wednesday.

Details of the story came out Wednesday in a sentencing hearing for John W. Miller, 64, of Granite City. He previously pleaded guilty to aggravated sexual abuse in exchange for the state's agreement to drop two counts of criminal sexual assault.

Circuit Judge Kyle Napp sentenced Miller to four years in prison for the abuse count, but the assault counts were used by Assistant State's Attorney Ali Foley as aggravating factors in the sentencing decision. The judge took no part in the negotiations.

Miller admitted on the witness stand that he committed the acts of oral sex on a male between May 1, 2002, and Jan. 30, 2006. The abuse charge alleges an act of fondling.

The victim, 33, testified Wednesday that pain from the assaults is still with him.

"It's still eating me up. I can feel it. I feel dirty. I feel dirty telling someone about it. I am scarred for life. I suffer from depression. I attempted suicide. I have trust issues," he said. He said he still feels uncomfortable around younger male relatives.

The victim said Miller fed him pain pills, which made him addicted. "I still have a lot of anger. I wanted to break his neck. He groomed me for years. I feel I will always be a failure. Still, to this day, I have nightmares and flashbacks."

He turned to Miller and said, through tears, "I don't hate you, but I hate what you did to me. You are a pedophile, and you will always be a pedophile," he told the judge that Miller was likely to plead for a light sentence because of his health.

The judge encouraged the victim to get help for his emotional disorders.

"You are a warrior. You are courageous. You came forward out of concern for another child. You were a 14-year-old child. You should have no guilt," she said.

Miller, while attached to an assistive breathing device, testified on his own behalf. He admitted performing oral sex acts on the boy but said he does not know why he did it. He claimed he never did it before or since. His attorney, Thomas Hildebrand, argued that his client deserves credit for taking responsibility for his crimes.

Miller said he suffers from a chronic lung disease, referred to as COPD. He was using a cane and testified he suffers from nerve damage in his legs.

The judge told him that cases like his are puzzling because pedophiles appear normal in every other respect. She said friends and family have submitted supportive letters on his behalf.

"You are a sexual predator. No one would ever believe that someone like you would ever do that," Napp said. She noted that Miller has no prior felony convictions.

The assault charges would have been punishable by consecutive sentences of between four and 15 years in prison. The abuse count is punishable by a prison term of between three and seven years in prison. Miller will get a day off for each “good” day he serves.