

Man raped by monks gets £1.4m in 'highest ever' damages award for Scots sex abuse survivor

The survivor, now 54, spoke of relief over payout following depraved abuse he suffered from trio of monks from Christian Brothers sect.



BY Alan McEwen Court Reporter 04:30, 15 FEB 2022 **UPDATED** 07:20, 15 FEB 2022



Paul Kelly

A man who suffered horrific attacks by monks has been awarded £1.4 million in damages – the highest known sum ever paid out to a **sex abuse** survivor in Scotland.

The victim, who cannot be identified, was raped by a trio of notorious monks from the Christian Brothers **religious** sect.

Now 54, he was sent to its St Ninian's residential school in February 1980, aged 12, and remained there until April 1981.

While at the school in Falkland, **Fife**, he was molested and beaten by Brothers Ryan, Farrell and Kelly, and even forced to watch attacks on other children.

The brothers targeted kids from a dormitory they referred to as “the favourite boys room”.

They frequently played ‘Ashes to Ashes’ by David Bowie during assaults – a song that continues to spark flashbacks for the victim.

He told how the attacks started as ‘punishment’ for swapping tuck shop snacks with other youngsters.

Following the ruling, he said: “Finally, after nearly 40 years, I’ve been acknowledged and those responsible can be exposed.”

He kept the abuse secret from his wife and daughter until opening up for the first time in 2013 when speaking to police.



Archbishop Philip Tartaglia offered profound apology to those who have suffered abuse by anyone within Catholic Church.

He said: “I just broke down in tears. Until then I’d been living in my head for 30 years.

“I used to hide all my emotions. If there was something about abuse on the TV then I’d go to the toilet and hide so no one would see any reaction on my face.

“So when I finally spoke to the police there was a strange duality to everything.

“It was terrifying but empowering. Exhausting but freeing. Painful but therapeutic.”

In July 2016 Brother John Farrell, then 73, was convicted of four abuse charges while Brother Paul Kelly, then 64, was convicted of six at the High Court in Glasgow.

Farrell was jailed for five years and Kelly for 10 years.

The evidence of the victim, known as AB, didn't play a part in the convictions.

But Sheriff Christopher Dickson ruled the abuse did occur due to the volume of supporting evidence gathered during a historic abuse claim with solicitors Digby Brown.

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John Farrell

Digby Brown said the sect tried to have the civil action thrown out, claiming Brother Ryan's 2013 death meant they couldn't investigate AB's allegations.

In his 173-page judgment, Sheriff Dickson wrote: "I did not consider that the death of one of three alleged abusers automatically resulted in the defender proving substantial prejudice in so far as the case is directed against Brother Ryan."

The court heard AB "psychiatric conditions" prevented him from working for the past 38 years.

Welcoming the £1.39m award, AB said: "I am glad the sheriff and court believed me.

“I’ll always feel the pain. I’ll always have flashbacks.

“But at least now I’m not alone. I am supported. I have been recognised. And I can now slowly look to the future instead of being chained to my past.”

Kim Leslie, partner at Digby Brown, said: “We’re not aware of any higher sums ever being awarded to a survivor so this settlement is truly a landmark one – not just for AB but for survivors everywhere as it shows legal actions offer recognition even when the criminal system can’t.”