

The Virgin Islands Consortium

BVI Man Sentenced to 21 Years in Jail for Sexually Abusing Step-daughter

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A British Virgin Islands man, convicted of incest and indecent assault against his stepdaughter, has been sentenced by High Court Judge Thomas Astaphan to 21 years behind bars.

According to reporting from [BVI News](#), when the girl was eight years old, she penned a letter in which she said the man, who at the time was dating her mother, had touched her buttocks. The minor subsequently called the letter a joke.

The mother eventually married her boyfriend a short while later, and the child said that her now-stepfather escalated his abuse to raping her while her mother was not at home.

Afraid to speak up, the minor remained silent until September 2021. She disclosed the abuse to her brother, who does not live in the BVI, and he in turn informed their mother.

The woman reportedly confronted her husband, who confessed to touching his step-daughter.

In her victim impact statement, the girl called her abuser a “demon.” She told the court that the man had “robbed me of my childhood and has taken away my sanity and dignity.” She never expected her mother’s boyfriend to attack her this way after he became her stepfather and moved into the family home, she said. “He is...a heartless individual who has no regard for young girls.”

Meanwhile, the sentencing judge noted that the man could have faced a longer stint behind bars if prosecutors had, instead of incest, brought rape charges against the perpetrator. In his judgment, Justice Astaphan pointedly remarked that each of the acts committed against the child was rape, which is punishable by a maximum sentence of life in prison, as opposed to a 10-year maximum term for incest.

Statutory rape, Justice Astaphan further noted, carries a maximum sentence of 14-years in prison.

Ultimately, the man, who has not been named in an attempt to protect the privacy of his victim, will serve three consecutive seven-year sentences for the three counts of incest on which he was convicted, while a two-year, three-month sentence of indecent assault will be served concurrently with the other sentences.

Justice Astaphan determined that the man will have to spend 13 years and four months in prison before becoming eligible for parole, and he will have to complete an approved counseling or rehabilitation program during that time.