

Rabbi convicted of molesting daughter

By [Leon Symons](#), April 2, 2009

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Rabbi Israel Weingarten in a picture shown to the court

A strictly Orthodox rabbi is due to be sentenced on Friday after being convicted of molesting his daughter. Some of the attacks took place in the UK.

Brooklyn Federal Court heard that Rabbi Israel Weingarten, a member of the Satmar sect, had started abusing his daughter when she was nine years old and had moved his family from America to Israel, Belgium and Britain in order to avoid detection.

Weingarten was convicted of five counts of travelling outside the country to have sex with a minor and could face at least 20 years in prison.

The daughter, now 27, has changed her name and left Orthodox Judaism, but came forward and identified herself in open court as the rabbi's child. She appeared at the trial wearing a trouser suit and her hair loose, an appearance which she said her father would find unacceptable.

The rabbi, after dismissing his lawyers, elected to defend himself, calling on his daughter's siblings to give evidence against her, and cross-examined the girl to the point of tears.

She told him from the witness stand: "My feeling from your molesting me was utmost fear and blackmail and years of torture...didn't I get hit enough?"

After the verdict, the daughter said being questioned by her father was "like being molested again". She added: "I wish he wasn't my father."

She told jurors that once she grew up she had hoped "to forget everything that happened to me", even though her father had warned her she "would never be able to prove it". But she went public at the urging of her mother, who was embroiled in a custody dispute with her father.

At one point Weingarten, now divorced from his wife, claimed that she had fabricated the abuse allegations as part of the bitter break-up.

He also tried to bring three of his younger children to the witness stand to testify that his ex-wife had committed the abuse, but Judge John Gleeson refused to permit this.

In the late 1990s, while the family were living in Manchester, Weingarten's activities came close to being uncovered, which led to a Greater Manchester police officer travelling to New York to give evidence at the request of the FBI.

Inspector Charlotte Cadden, who manages the Bury Division's intelligence unit, travelled to New York and took the stand to testify at the trial.

Inspector Cadden became involved in the case in February 1999 while she was working at Salford CID and was asked to investigate a report that Rabbi Weingarten was attempting to abduct his daughter from her Manchester school and take her to Belgium against her will.

Rabbi Weingarten was arrested on suspicion of sexual assault after the victim told Inspector Cadden that her father had been sexually abusing her for years. However, no prosecution was made at that time as all of the offences appeared to have taken place outside the UK.

The FBI learned of Inspector Cadden's previous involvement in the case and, in January, asked her to travel to New York to give evidence at the trial. She was accompanied by her former colleague, PC Rob Longman of Wigan Division.

Inspector Cadden said: "I, PC Longman and the victim were cross-examined by Weingarten, which must have been a horrendous experience for her.

"The FBI arranged for us to meet the victim after we had given evidence and she said that we had literally saved her life by getting her away from her father, which was very emotional to hear."

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