



Bristol Post gets it wrong with the "respectable family man" myth

David Jordan was found guilty of six sexual offences against a child who was 13-14 at the time. He has been sentenced to 6 years in prison. These are the facts which require extrapolating from some fairly turgid prose.

The title starts with the inflammatory : "Six years in prison for Bristol-area family man who treated 13-year-old girl as "personal sex toy".

We then have this phrase:

A SEEMINGLY respectable family man has been jailed for six years for "ruining" a woman's life by sexually abusing her as a child.

Why is ruining in quotation marks when it's clear that it is a direct statement taken from the victim. Grammatical rules do not require it to be in quotation marks at this point so the inclusion reads as if the journalist does not believe the victim.

We then have the ubiquitous example of poor journalist practise by conflating sexual offences with sex with the use of the term "sex offences". Jordan was not found guilty of sex offences. The law uses the term sexual offences for reason: because sexual violence is not sex. This conflation is followed up the claim "even introduced bondage when he tied her up in a van". There is so much wrong with the sentence that we can't quite work out how to respond appropriately. The term bondage is, simply, grossly inappropriate.

The next sentence has the term consented within quotation marks. Again, this implies that the law is wrong rather than Jordan's sexual exploitation and abuse of child.

This is the end of the article:

In mitigation, Judge Horton read a "very large" number of glowing character references written about the defendant. His barrister, Mary Cowe said he was highly unlikely to offend again in future. There would be a "severe impact" on his family, both emotionally and financially, now he has been jailed, she added.

"This is a hard-working man who loves his family," she said.

There may be a severe impact on the family of David Jordan but he did that when he chose to sexually abuse a child. His family are not more important than the abuse he committed and being a 'hard-working man who loves his family' has never stopped a perpetrator. In fact, many perpetrators use the myth of the respectable family man as a cover. These myths, even when the victims are the perpetrator's children, make it difficult for children to report. It doesn't matter how many glowing character references are written, how much a man loves his wife, or whether or not they need his salary to pay the mortgage, David Jordan chose to repeatedly sexually



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abuse a child. Nothing he can do will make up for that abuse. 6 years in prison isn't even a long enough sentence for the harm he did to the victim who has suffered from substance misuse and attempted suicide as a consequence of her experience of sexual abuse.

David Jordan isn't a respectable or hard-working family man. He is a man who chose to repeatedly harm a child. And, he is being held criminally liable for that harm.