

News

Siblings say mother tried to almost 50 years ago, but

Amanda, Christopher and Jessica said that their mother was also a victim in how their father used alcohol against her and also said they are disappointed that anyone who knew what was going on back then did not show the 'basic instinct' to ensure they were protected from abuse

By Cara McHugh

SIBLINGS Amanda, Christopher, Jessica and another daughter who cannot be named for anonymity purposes spoke to The *Sligo Weekender* about their harrowing childhood and the sentencing of their father Noel Farrell for charges of sexually abusing his children.

Noel Farrell was handed a sentence of 20 years in prison last Friday, February 20 in the Criminal Courts of Justice in Dublin. Amanda described how she is feeling now that the sentencing has happened, "justice has been served, we have finally been heard", she said. Another daughter said "finally, we got to be listened to and we got to be heard, after being through counsellors growing up and saying the same story over and over again - to not have to repeat it again is putting it to rest for me".

However, Christopher said that "the sentence wasn't enough for me. I feel it should have been longer, but I'm glad he is behind bars".

He feels the sentence should not have been reduced as it was a headline sentence of 30 years that was reduced to 20 given Noel Farrell's age of 70.



"If you put that [20 years] into numbers and figures for each child, that's less than five years each - that's absolutely nothing", said Christopher. He described why some of the siblings decided to waive their right to anonymity in order for Farrell to be named.

"Basically, our mother had a drinking problem, and it was always blamed on her", he said. "We wanted to name Noel and let people know exactly what he did".

Jessica said that "people need to know, to give others a voice that they're not alone and that they will be heard".

Amanda said that "the only thing that I would regret is that I didn't do it earlier".

The siblings also wanted to share their mother's side of the story, as they felt that this had not been adequately painted with stories

circulating about the case for the last week. They said that their mother had an alcohol problem, but that this problem escalated whenever she met Noel Farrell.

They detailed how their mother was the first one who went and reported the sexual abuse of the eldest daughter Amanda in 1979, when she caught Noel Farrell sexually abusing Amanda when she was just seven years of age. The siblings said that there was no action taken from her report.

They described how Noel Farrell would bring their mother to the pub and leave her there so he could go back to the house and sexually abuse the children.

They also said that he would buy bottles of vodka for her daily and "force the drink upon her", as Christopher said that, "he filled her with drink to silence her, so she couldn't see what he was doing to us".

They said that their mother on several occasions attempted to confront Noel Farrell when he was playing in the local pubs with his band, 'New

"If you were a parent and you acknowledged and knew something was wrong, then you should have been stepping forward and stepping in - protecting us, that's a basic instinct."

Sligo Weekender

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