

Beat: Vips

Veteran BBC broadcaster Stuart Hall jailed for child sex assaults

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USPA News - Veteran British television and radio presenter Stuart Hall was sentenced Monday to more than a year in prison after he pleaded guilty to sexually abusing more than a dozen young girls between the ages of 9 and 17, prosecutors said, calling him an "opportunistic predator." The investigation against Hall, 83, was launched by Scotland Yard in October 2012 when they received an anonymous letter which alleged the presenter had sexually abused the writer when she was a young teenager in the 1970s.

He was eventually arrested in December after four other victims came forward independently. Hall was charged with three counts of indecent assault for offenses committed between 1974 and 1984 that involved three girls between the ages of 9 and 17. He was arrested again in January after more victims came forward, and he was then charged with one count of rape and 14 counts of indecent assault for offenses committed between 1967 and 1986 that involved 10 girls between the ages of 9 and 17 years. The former BBC entertainer initially denied all the offenses but eventually pleaded guilty on April 16 to all fourteen counts of indecent assault after four of the charges were rolled into one indictment. He denied raping a 22-year-old woman and prosecutors decided to drop the case, leaving it to lie on file. The woman who wrote the anonymous letter that sparked the investigation and led to the first arrest eventually came forward in December to identify herself. She was interviewed by officers and gave a formal statement, but she later asked prosecutors not to pursue her case after learning Hall had pleaded guilty in the other assaults. Appearing at Preston Crown Court on Monday, Hall was sentenced to 15 months in prison for the assaults. Judge Anthony Russell said the presenter would have received 20 months in prison if the case had gone to trial, but he reduced the sentence by five months to reflect his guilty pleas. "I welcome today's sentence imposed by the court and I hope that it will help the victims in this case move forward with their lives," said Detective Superintendent Neil Esseen of Lancashire Constabulary's Major Investigation Team. "I would like once again to commend the victims in this case for having the courage to come forward." Esseen added: "They have lived with what happened for a long period of time and it cannot have been easy for them to come forward, especially as when they did so, they did not know there were others who had also suffered abuse. We are committed to investigating any allegations of sexually abuse thoroughly and with sensitivity, no matter how long ago they happened and we will always strive to protect our communities, no matter the status of the alleged perpetrator." In a brief statement, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) said the corporation was "appalled" by Hall's crimes and previously indicated they will no longer work with him. "The BBC is appalled that some of Stuart Hall's crimes took place in connection with his work at the BBC and offer an unreserved apology to the people he abused," the broadcaster said.

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