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Michael Brewer: Victim 'killed herself' during trial

8 February 2013



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| Frances Andrade gave evidence from the witness box

A woman who was indecently assaulted by a leading choir director and his ex-wife died after giving evidence during their trial, it can be revealed.

Frances Andrade, 48, is believed to have killed herself after appearing at the trial of Michael and Hilary Brewer at Manchester Crown Court.

Mrs Andrade's son Oliver said having her personal integrity challenged in court was "more than she could bear".

Brewer, 68, and his ex-wife Hilary, 67, were convicted earlier.

In a statement, Oliver Andrade said: "Like all people she was not impervious.

"Being repeatedly called a liar and a fantasist about a horrific part of her life in front of a court challenged her personal integrity and was more than even she could bear."

Violin teacher

Brewer, of Selly Oak, Birmingham, was convicted of carrying out the sexual

abuse in his office at Chetham's School of Music between 1978 and 1982.

Hilary Brewer, also known by her middle name Kay, and of Knowl Gap Avenue, Haslingden, was convicted of indecently assaulting the same victim when she was an adult at their then family home.

She was cleared of aiding and abetting rape.

The jury cleared Brewer of rape and one charge of indecently assaulting the victim as a child in his home.

They had both denied all charges.

| Michael and Hilary Brewer had denied all charges at Manchester Crown Court

Mrs Andrade was found dead at her home in Guildford, Surrey, less than a week after she gave evidence.

The revelation came after the prosecution case closed and Brewer was defending himself.

Mrs Andrade, a violin teacher, chose to give evidence in the witness box in view of everyone in the courtroom, including the two defendants in the dock.

Giving evidence, she said she was abused by Brewer as she visited his office.

The jury was told she did not consider it sexual abuse at the time and did not make an official complaint.

It was revealed in court while the jury was not there that Mrs Andrade had died and it was believed she had killed herself.

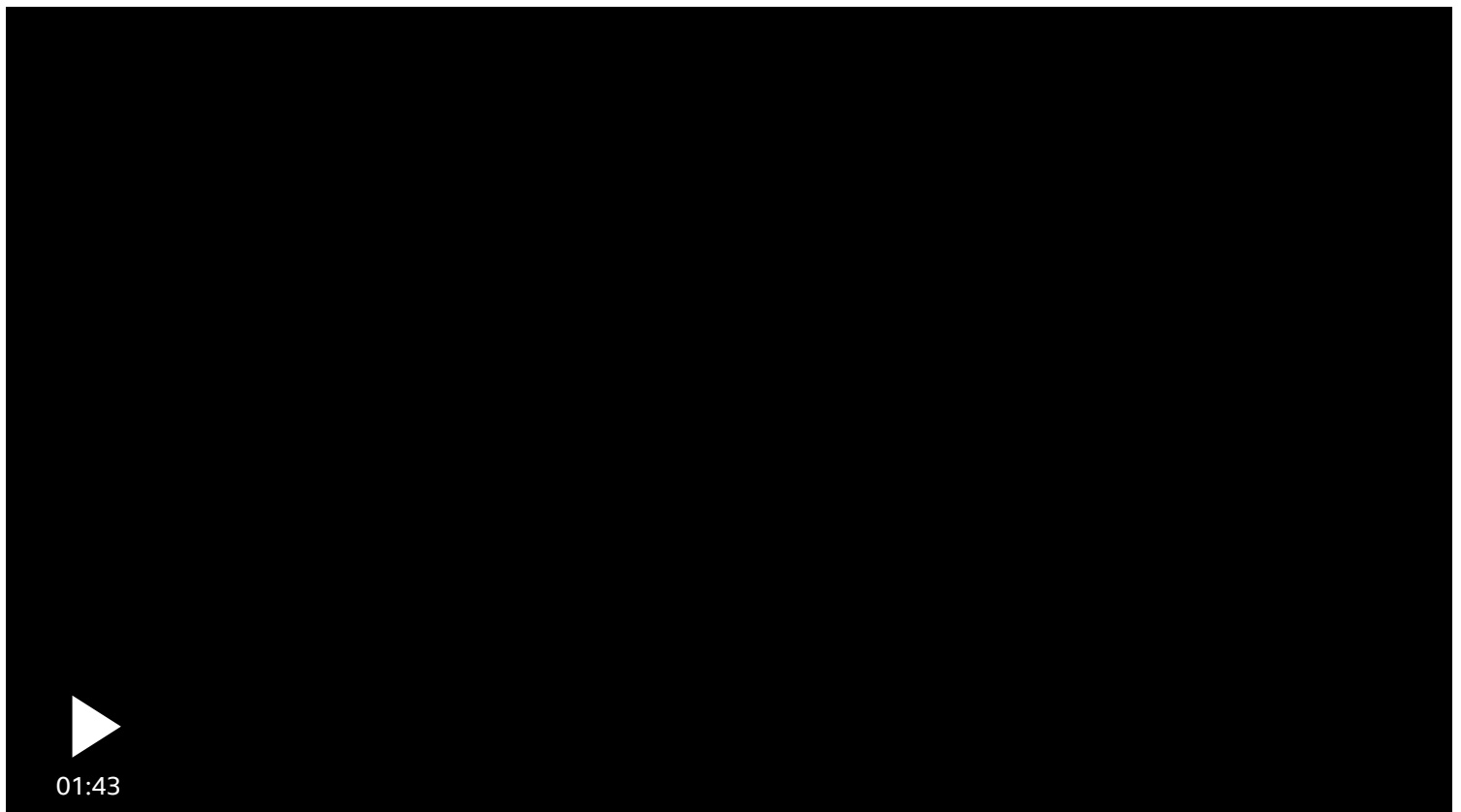
Judge Rudland put a temporary reporting ban on her death and kept it from the jury.

Speaking after the verdict, Mrs Andrade's son said his mother was "sorely missed" by her husband of 25 years Levine Andrade, a well-known viola player, and her four sons.

He said that during the trial she was "exceptionally uncomfortable throughout" and she was only just beginning to see that Brewer's actions were indeed abuse.

"She was forced to relive the many times Michael Brewer had sexually abused her as a child - both to the police, on multiple occasions, and in court to a hostile party."

Det Ch Insp Dave Pester said the music director's crimes were "appalling" and it was tragic she was not here to see justice done.



| Claire Moreland. Head of Chetham's School of Music: "We are shocked to the core"

"Michael Brewer was revered by his pupils and he abused the responsible position that he held to indecently assault a young, vulnerable school girl who was residing at the school and far from home," he said.

During the trial, Peter Cadwallader, prosecuting, said Brewer had also acted in an improper way towards two other female pupils - years after the alleged victim in the case left the school.

In 1994 he was forced to resign from Chetham's after an inappropriate relationship with a 16-year-old girl, Mr Cadwallader said.

The court heard she regularly visited his office and recalled he would persuade her to take off her top and bra and he would fondle her.

Giving evidence, Brewer admitted the 1994 affair.

Brewer, who was appointed OBE in 1995, directed the World Youth Choir and also worked on the BBC's Last Choir Standing programme.

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