Beat: Vips

Jailed BBC broadcaster Stuart Hall charged with raping 2 girls

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USPA News - Veteran British television and radio presenter Stuart Hall, who is currently serving 2.5 years in prison for sexually abusing more than a dozen young girls as young as 9, was re-arrested Wednesday and charged with 15 counts of rape relating to two young girls. The new charges were authorized by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) after prosecutors found "sufficient evidence" to prosecute Hall, age 83, for 16 alleged sexual offenses against two girls.

It is alleged that the presenter committed the offenses against one girl, aged between 14 and 16, from 1976 to 1978 and another girl, aged between 11 or 12 and 15, from 1976 to 1981. "This decision to prosecute has been taken in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors, the CPS legal guidance on rape and sexual offences and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) guidelines on prosecuting cases of child sexual abuse," said Nazir Afzal, Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS North West, adding that it is "in the public interest" to pursue the case. Prosecutors said the first victim was raped at least seven times in the city of Manchester while the second victim was raped at least eight times while in Stockport, Wilmslow, Manchester and Sale. The sixteenth charge refers to an alleged indecent assault of the second victim in Stockport in 1976. Afzal said the CPS authorized the charges after a "careful review" of the case. "May I remind all concerned that Mr Hall has a right to a fair trial," he emphasized. "It is very important that nothing is said, or reported, which could prejudice that trial. For these reasons, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further." The new charges came just a day after St. James`s Palace confirmed Queen Elizabeth II had decided to strip Hall of his Order of the British Empire (OBE) that was awarded in 2011 for services to broadcasting and charity. "The Queen has directed that the appointment of James Stuart Hall ... shall be cancelled and annulled and that his name shall be erased from the Register of the said Order," the palace said. Hall was sentenced to 15 months in prison in June after he pleaded guilty to sexually abusing more than a dozen young girls between the ages of 9 and 17. The investigation had been launched in October 2012 when police received an anonymous letter which alleged Hall had sexually abused the writer when she was a young teenager in the 1970s. The presenter was eventually arrested in December after four other victims came forward independently, but Hall initially denied all the offenses before pleading guilty on April 16 to fourteen counts of indecent assault. 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. During the sentencing in June, prosecutors called Hall an "opportunistic predator" and Judge Anthony Russell said he 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. That 15-month jail sentence was doubled by the Court of Appeal in July.

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