

# Guilty of raping 9-year-old

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News Shopper Staff

A SEX offender who attacked a nine-year-old girl and made her swear secrecy on the bible was jailed for six years.

Anthony Rickman Blair, aged 36, of Cotton Hill, Bromley, raped and photographed the youngster when she stayed at his mother's house, in Brixton, 10 years ago.

The victim, now 20, decided to go to police fearing he might abuse his own children.

Blair was expected to go on trial at the Old Bailey earlier this year but pleaded guilty to rape and two charges of indecent assault on the first day, meaning the trial did not take place.

Prosecutor Sarah Plaschkes told the court how Blair struck when the girl stayed at his mother's house in Brixton and played on his computer.

Blair later raped her and told her to swear on the bible not to tell anyone. Two further sexual assaults took place at his home.

A few years later, he went into her room while she was asleep but backed off and began sobbing when she pleaded with him. The abuse came to light when the victim confided in a friend and the news reached her family.

Blair, by then a married father, confessed the assault but denied raping her and police were not informed.

The girl later informed police out of fear for his daughter.

Defence lawyer Christopher Morris said Blair had no sexual experience at the time of the assaults. He added: "He is not a predatory paedophile. If he had been, he would have left a trail of destruction in the 10-year period since these events."

Judge Elgan Edwards sentenced Blair on May 1 to six years for rape, three years for one indecent assault and two years for the other, all to run concurrently.

Blair was also banned from ever working with children, and was put on the Sex Offenders Register for life.