

[British Columbia](#)

Jury dismissed in sexual abuse, assault trial of former 2x2 church minister

Sexual abuse allegations facing 2x2 church members in Ontario and B.C.



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The B.C. Supreme Court jury hearing the sexual assault trial of a former 2x2 church minister has been dismissed after the defence re-elected to have the trial heard by judge alone. (Peter Scobie/CBC)

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The sexual abuse trial of a former 2x2 Christian sect minister has been switched from a judge and jury trial, to a trial by judge alone at the request of the defence.

Lee-Ann McChesney has pleaded not guilty to one count of sexual abuse and one count of sexual exploitation. The charges relate to incidents in 1989 in or around the B.C. cities of Terrace, Delta and Surrey. None of the allegations have been proven in court.

Twelve jurists started hearing the trial when it began on Sept. 8 in B.C. Supreme Court in New Westminster. However, the jury has now been dismissed after McChesney re-elected to have the case heard by a judge sitting alone, according to Damienne Darby with the British Columbia Prosecution Service.

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McChesney was arrested in January 2024 after complainant Lyndell Montgomery went to police 35 years after the alleged abuse took place. Montgomery turned 15 in the summer of 1989.

Montgomery requested her name not be put under a publication ban, as is common in cases involving the alleged sexual abuse of a child or youth.

Now 51 years old, Montgomery is among a number of former 2x2 members who have gone public with stories of historical childhood sexual abuse within the 2x2 community.

FBI Investigation

Last year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began [investigating the 2x2 church](#) in the United States, asking victims to come forward.

The FBI action came after the launch of a 2x2 victim hotline run by [Advocates for the Truth](#), an organization of former church members and survivors who say for decades, church leaders have ignored child sexual abuse within their ranks, while protecting predators.

In its first year of operation, the hotline received more than 1,500 unconfirmed reports of historical child sexual abuse and other offences, related to more than 900 alleged perpetrators.

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Lyndell Montgomery says she wants to tell her story of alleged sexual abuse within the 2x2s church so other survivors don't feel alone.

Last week in Guelph, Ont., 2x2 senior church member Brian Cox was found not guilty on two counts of gross indecency and four counts of sexual assault related to incidents between 1986 and 1991.

Like Montgomery, the two complainants in the case, Kristin Bax and Janice Klinetobe, are former 2x2 members who argued in front of the judge to have the publication ban on their names lifted.

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Bax is also one of two complainants in a case against her parents, 2x2 elder Murray Richards and Ruth Richards. Their trial begins in Guelph in January.

Murray Richards is charged with assault, sexual assault, forcible confinement, eight counts of indecent assault on a female and 12 counts of gross indecency. Ruth Richards is facing charges of assault and forcible confinement. The date range of the charges is 1961 to 1987. None of the charges have been proven in court.

The publication ban on Bax's name and fellow complainant Lois McElrea was also lifted in the Richards' case.

'Dealt with by God'

Bax said when she told 2x2 leaders about the alleged abuse decades ago, she was told to be quiet.

"When we wanted to caution others about our perpetrators, our ministers told us that we didn't need to go to the law, and we needed to just have faith, that on the judgment day ... these people would be dealt with by God."



Former 2x2 members Janice Klinetobe and Kristin Bax, left, hug after giving testimony at the sexual abuse trial of Brian Cox. Cox was found not guilty on all charges. Bax, right, is also a complainant in the sexual abuse trial of her parents. (submitted by Kristin Bax)

CBC News reached out to three senior 2x2 leaders to ask for comment on the three court cases. Two of the men declined and the third never responded to an email request.

According to a number of 2x2 members and former members CBC News spoke to, the outpouring of allegations within the church community was triggered by a letter distributed within the sect describing deceased senior church leader, Dean Bruer, as a sexual predator. Bruer died in an Oregon motel room in 2022.

- [Her mother stayed with the man who abused her. Today, she helps other victims of childhood sexual assault](#)

Former church member Pamela Walton tracks arrests and convictions within the 2x2s. Walton, a survivor of child sexual assault, says she does it as a resource for the next generation.

"Being raised in the church, I know how we are taught not to speak up," she said.

"It is very important to me that someone looks out for the children who are still attending the church. I want them to know that when they get older and they search the internet [that] someone out there believes them — if and when they choose to come forward."



Lyndell Montgomery is the complainant in the historical sexual abuse trial of former 2x2 church minister Lee-Ann McChesney. (Chris Corday/CBC)

The McChesney trial is scheduled to resume Nov. 10.

So far in proceedings, Montgomery has testified that McChesney was a minister in the "high control" 2x2 church. Ministers are called "workers" within the sect, she explained.

"In the 2x2's belief system, defying a worker is similar to defying God," Montgomery told the court. "If I wanted to be chosen and go to heaven, then I had to follow the workers' rules, requests and regulations."

Montgomery testified that after her nuclear family "imploded" she was sent to live with McChesney.

She said McChesney drove her to Terrace in the spring or summer of 1989, and it was there, at McChesney's parents' home, where the alleged sexual abuse began. McChesney later drove her to a property in Delta, Montgomery testified, where McChesney allegedly sexually assaulted her.