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Paedophile [who identified as female] secretly filmed women in public toilet and sexually assaulted tourist on Durham city bridge

Kurtis Mawson, 22, has now been put behind bars for 25 months

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Kristy Dawson Multi-Media Journalist

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Kurtis Mawson has been jailed for 25 months (Image: Durham Constabulary)

A paedophile who filmed women in public toilets and sexually assaulted a tourist on a bridge has been locked up.

Kurtis Mawson was spotted inside female toilets near the Odeon at Millburngate shopping centre in **Durham** city. The 22-year-old was inside a closed cubicle and was standing on the toilet looking into the next cubicle.

Durham Crown Court heard how the member of the public who saw him **on May 5, 2022** contacted police 10.48am and kept watch until they arrived. They also ushered a group of young women out of the toilets.

Liam O'Brien, prosecuting, told the court how Mawson was still inside the toilet cubicle when police arrived and an officer asked if anybody was in there. In an attempt to conceal his identity, Mawson put on a high pitched voice and answering "Yeah".

The prosecutor said one of the officers climbed on top of a toilet to continue a conversation with him. He said: "When challenged with what he is doing in a women's toilet he said: 'Just chilling'. **He then said he was there as he identified as female.**"

When police arrested him, they found him in possession of a mobile phone and a digital camera. He had recorded material of women using the toilet.

Mr O'Brien told the court: "One of the officers expressed at one stage 'What's wrong with you?'. The defendant answered 'There is something wrong with me, I need help'.

Mawson told police he had purchased a mini camera specifically for recording women and had hidden inside a toilet cubicle until someone entered the stall next to him so he could film them.

The court in Durham heard how Mawson's home was searched and a number of digital devices, including a computer and its hard drive, were seized. They were found to contain indecent images of children.

A further computer device was then seized from Mawson, which contained more indecent images of children.

Mr O'Brien said there were 80 category category A images - the most serious - as well as category B and C images. There was also an extreme pornographic image of a person engaging in an act with a dog.

In June last year, while on police bail, Mawson committed a sex act next to a tourist who was taking a picture of Durham Cathedral from a bridge in Durham. During the act, **he subjected the woman to a sexual assault.**

Mr O'Brien said: "She was incredibly distressed. She didn't know what to with herself. She asked a number of passers by for help."

In a victim impact statement, which Mr O'Brien read to the court, the woman said: "This was my first time visiting Durham. I was excited to see the cathedral. But this incident has made me feel shocked and speechless."

She said that it made her no longer want to wear a skirt or shorts again, adding: "I do not want this to happen to anybody else."

Mawson, who appeared in court via video link to prison, also went on to breach a sexual harm order and the sex offenders register. He did this by setting up three accounts on dating websites Hinge, Bumble and Tinder without informing police.

He also used an alias to set up a profile on a gaming website called Steam, in which users can communicate, without telling officers. He called himself 'Patrick Bateman' after the fictional character in horror film American Psycho.

Mawson, High Street, Willington, **County Durham**, pleaded guilty to sexual assault on a female, voyeurism, three counts of making indecent photographs of a child and possessing an extreme pornographic image. He also admitted breaching a sexual risk order and failing to comply with the sexual offender register.

Brian Mark, defending, told the court that Mawson, who has slight Asperger's Syndrome, admits responsibly for his actions and apologises to the victims. He said: "He acknowledges that he needs serious help.

"What he does need is not just to be sent to a prison, receive no help or proper courses and then be thrown out. That would not assist society, it would not assist the court.

"What he wants is to have treatment so when he comes out of prison he's not going to go back to prison."

His barrister told the court that he is now disgusted by the videos and the pictures. He added: "He doesn't want to do that again. He never wants to behave in that way again. He said it's disgusting behaviour, behaviour he doesn't want to repeat."