

Abusers at orphanage ‘groomed me to pass on to gang’

- Scottish Daily Mail
- 3 Nov 2018
- By Graham Grant Home Affairs Editor

A FORMER orphanage resident subjected to three years of abuse said yesterday a paedophile ring may have been based at the home.

David Whelan, 61, said he had been ‘sexualised’ by a member of staff at Quarriers Village in Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire, after being admitted in March 1969 at the age of 11.

He told the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) of his fears he had been ‘groomed’ with the intention of ‘passing him on’ to a wealthy businessman for sexual abuse.

Mr Whelan, who left Quarriers at 16, said he had endured sustained abuse at the hands of an ‘unrepentant paedophile’ who was supposed to be looking after him.

He said Quarriers had been like a ‘military camp’ – and that a housefather there locked him in a shed and beat him with a baton.

He also spoke of his fears that a ‘paedophile ring’ comprising some former residents of the home had been operating at Quarriers.

Mr Whelan said he believed he was going to be ‘passed on’ to a ‘multi-millionaire’ businessman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, and that prior to this he was being ‘groomed’ by a staff member at Quarriers.

He told the Edinburgh hearing: ‘I believe I was being groomed to be passed on. At the time, you try and understand what’s going on.

‘I’m as clear as daylight – I was going to be passed on.

‘I just wonder if there was a paedophile ring operating out of Quarriers, with some former residents.’

Mr Whelan said ‘constant’ sexual abuse ‘became a way of life’, adding: ‘I thought it was normal.’

He said a member of staff, who cannot be named for legal reasons, had attempted to rape him and stopped Mr Whelan from moving to a hostel used as a ‘stepping stone’ to the outside world.

Mr Whelan said: ‘I believe he did not want me to tell anyone.’

He discovered in 2002 that allegations had been against his abuser, leading him to contact police for the first time.

In later life, Mr Whelan said he was 'relatively stable' and became a 'workaholic'. But he accused Quarriers of failing to settle a compensation claim because its insurers had refused to accept he had been abused by the man.

He said: 'I actually feel I have been abused all over again by Quarriers.'

Mr Whelan also spoke of strict rules and carers who would lash out, often leaving him 'petrified'. He added: 'This was supposed to be a care home. From start to finish, it was like being in a military establishment.

They used derogatory language just to demean you, to belittle you.

'We weren't soldiers – we were children. There was no affection.

It was like the Victorian era, where the child was seen and not heard.'

Mr Whelan said the abuse went unchallenged by those in higher authority at the orphanage.

He added: 'Bruises heal, but what happens with the psychological stuff is it stays with you.

'It was beyond the bounds of what was reasonable. It was brutality and cruelty.'

In 2002, John Porteous, 85 – who is due to give evidence to the SCAI next Thursday – was convicted of sexually abusing Mr Whelan while he was in his care.

Quarriers has apologised to residents who were abused.

The inquiry, before Lady Smith, continues on Tuesday.

'It was brutality and cruelty'