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HOW COULD BBC BELIEVE THE BEAST BUT NOT ME?

Exclusive Watchdog backs victim by Marion Scott

A VICTIM of child abuser branded the "Beast in the Belltower" yesterday condemned BBC program makers for taking his tormentor's side.

David Whelan spoke out after the Beeb's complaints body criticized Frontline Scotland's accuracy and impartiality.

Their Secrets or Lies program broadcast four years ago examined the conviction of John Porteous- a former Quarriers carer convicted of abusing two boys.

Frontline claimed they made the programme to establish if some children "made up false allegations against him in order to claim compensation."

But they were criticized by watchdogs for a "strong and damaging critique of David, 49 and failing to consider the court had found he was a victim of abuse.

Businessman David said: "I find it extremely disturbing that they were making a programme about a supposed miscarriage of justice and were questioning whether victims lied.

"I was a very small, mild mannered child, which was why Porteous picked on me as one of his victims.

"The public were given entirely the wrong perception, that I was a scheming liar and he was a poor innocent soul."

Porteous, 74 was convicted in 2002 of sexually abusing two boys in his care at a home in Quarriers Village, Renfrewshire, and sentenced to eight years, which was later cut to five years.

He was released from prison last year and lives in nearby Kilmacolm.

The BBC's editorial standards committee found producers relied on the views of those who did not believe Porteous abused David but never checked trial transcripts.

Interviews with David's sister Irene were edited to cut out more balanced material and an accusation Porteous had hit her and smashed her face of a sink.

David said: "It causes me great sadness that Irene died of cancer two years without ever getting this apology."

The show, presented by Sam Poling, used a child from a theatre group run by Porteous's daughter to play a victim.

The watchdogs expressed concern that Frontlines failures may be the result of "systemic failures".

Richard Tait, Chairman of the Committee, apologized for the "errors of judgement"

Frontline Scotland said they were studying the findings and would answer and follow-up questions from bosses.

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