

A life ruined by Caldicott paedophile



The former public school boy was a homeless drug addict by his 20s Tom Pilston/Times Newspapers Ltd

A pupil “timetabled for rape” at an elite prep school where he was a classmate of Nick Clegg revealed yesterday how years of abuse by two teachers damaged him for life.

Ian McFadyen said that his time at Caldicott School, where five former members of staff were responsible for the systemic sexual abuse of more than 30 children over two decades, turned an innocent child into a broken teenager who felt that he had “no worth and no value”.

His parents, both from working-class backgrounds, had sent him to Caldicott because “they thought they were giving me the advantages they never had”.

However, after he was expelled from his next school at the age of 15, his life lurched into “absolute chaos”. By his 20s, the former public schoolboy was a homeless drug addict, sleeping on the streets.

Waiving his right to anonymity for his first published interview about the crimes committed against him as a child, Mr McFadyen voiced outrage that the boarding school’s abuse victims were denied justice for years after the prosecution of Peter Wright, Caldicott’s former headmaster, was blocked by a judge in 2003.

“When I went to the police, they didn’t want to know. It was all being swept under the carpet. I was told my case could not be prosecuted. We’ve all had years of fighting the system to get some sort of justice.”

Wright, 83, found guilty on Tuesday of 12 offences against five pupils between 1959 and 1971, is the fourth former teacher at the school to be convicted of child-sex crimes in the 1960s and 1970s. A fifth died before he could be charged and a sixth was acquitted this year after a retrial.

John Addrison, 54, who spent a year at the school as a student teacher, is serving a five-year jail sentence after admitting last year 13 offences against six pupils at Caldicott and a second prep school, Moor Park, in Ludlow. They included gross indecency and two indecent assaults on Mr McFadyen, who was at Caldicott from 1975-1980, in the same year group as the Deputy Prime Minister. Addrison abused his 12-year-old victim in the school library.

His crimes against Mr McFadyen were minor only by comparison with those committed a year earlier by the school’s deputy headmaster, George Hill. Caldicott had a bath rota. One of the baths used by pupils was in Hill’s private bathroom, accessed via the teacher’s bedroom. Hill initially abused the child, then aged 11, in the bath but subsequently groomed the boy into a “relationship” that involved regular, violent sex in his bedroom.

“He knew it was very painful for me, but that’s what he seemed to enjoy. He’d stand there, a man in his 50s with leather patches on his tweed jacket, and he’d rape me.”

Because the bath rota was published on the Buckinghamshire school’s noticeboard the boy would come to know, well in advance, the days on which he was expected to knock on Hill’s bedroom door in his pyjamas and dressing gown, towel in hand.

“It was like a rota for abuse, a timetable for rape. Thursday night, Mr Hill’s room. I knew it was coming.

“All my life I’ve been so ashamed about this. Because he built a relationship with me. He manipulated me into believing that he loved me, and that this was somehow normal behaviour, that what he did to me was an expression of his love.”

Mr McFadyen took his first heroin at the age of 13. At 14, he caught trains to London and “slept with loads of men”. He thought, wrongly, that he was gay.

“I was lying and stealing, abusing solvents. I got expelled at 15. I’d turned from this pleasant little boy into another person, a really bad person, and I couldn’t understand why. When I look back, what happened at prep school damaged me for life.”

He finally hit rock bottom in his early 30s, when he woke on Christmas morning in a sleeping bag on Princes Street in Edinburgh. A child came out of a hotel, saw him lying near by, spoke to her parents then skipped over to drop a pound coin into his hat. His voice breaks as he recounts the story.

Help was sought and provided. Mr McFadyen has since worked as a homelessness and addiction counsellor. He is married and has agreed to his name being published because “paedophiles thrive on silence”.

Hill later committed suicide. Had he been alive, he would almost certainly have faced trial for offences carrying a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. His victim finally found the courage to speak to Thames Valley Police after watching an award-winning 2008 television documentary in which former Caldicott pupils spoke of abuse by other teachers at the school. Until then, Mr McFadyen had thought “it was only me”.

Two years of frustration followed as police and prosecutors showed no interest in pursuing his case. That changed in 2010 when a young officer, Detective Sergeant Andy Alexander, took control of the Caldicott files and vowed to bring the offenders to justice. A year later, prosecutors approved charges against four former teachers. “Andy was true to his word. He’s an exceptional police officer and I’ve the utmost respect for him.”

The Caldicott of 2013 is a very different school from that of 1973. Its child-safeguarding policies have won praise during inspections and the school was thanked by police for its assistance during the criminal investigations of the past three years.

This week's guilty verdicts against Wright have helped with the long, slow process of healing but Mr Mcfadyen, from Peebles, in the Scottish Borders, knows that he will take to his grave a yearning for what might have been.

“At Caldicott it was ingrained in you to be an honourable young man, the future of Britain, but some of us had those opportunities removed. I once had potential. I had a lot to offer the world. They took my potential from me, but I'm not going to let them win. I refuse to be defined by the people who took away my childhood.”

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