

# Chester County District Attorney's Office

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## NEWS RELEASE

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July 27, 2021

### **FORMER CHURCH FARM SCHOOL HOUSEPARENT CHARGED WITH SEXUAL ABUSE OF STUDENT**

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and West Whiteland Police announce that Daniel Rowley, 70, of Ft. Meyers, FL, was arrested and charged with the sexual abuse of a student between 2003 and 2007 when he was a houseparent and coach at Church Farm School (CFS) in Exton. The defendant was charged with ten counts each of Involuntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse and Statutory Sexual Assault, 20 counts of Indecent Assault of a Person Less than 16, and related offenses.

DA Deb Ryan said, "The sexual abuse of students and children is pervasive and needs to stop now. My office will root out any adult, wherever they live, who abuses or has abused children. It took many years for this victim to have the courage to reveal what had happened to him, and then more years to have the fortitude to speak with law enforcement. His bravery should be an example for other children and adults to come forward and seek help."

West Whiteland Police Chief Lee Benson said, "Thank you to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for their assistance in apprehending the defendant. Inter-agency collaboration such as this shows child predators that no one is out of our reach."

The allegations in the complaint are the following<sup>1</sup>:

West Whiteland Police received information in November 2018 about a former CFS student who was sexually abused by a houseparent during the student's freshman, junior, and senior years between 2003 and 2007. Earlier in 2018, the victim revealed the abuse to his guidance counselor – a mandated reporter – when he was at CFS; the victim, however, was not ready to speak with law enforcement about the abuse at that time.

In January 2021, West Whiteland Police were able to speak with the victim, who related that he lived in the cottage where the defendant was a houseparent when he was a freshman at CFS, the 2003-2004 school year. Houseparents are adults who live in residence halls with students and oversee their day-to-day living. During that school year, the defendant brought the victim into his living area three times a week, where he orally and anally sexually abused the victim.

When the victim was in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, on a school-sponsored trip to Florida with CFS baseball team members, the defendant walked in on the victim while he was showering.

The victim did not attend CFS as a sophomore but returned in 2005-2006 as a junior, where he, again, lived in the same cottage as the defendant. That year the defendant sexually assaulted the victim in his residence and as many as 20 times in the cottage's boiler room located in the basement.

The defendant's sexual abuse continued during the victim's senior year. In total, the defendant abused the victim hundreds of times while he was a student at CFS. The defendant left CFS in 2010 after an internal investigation.

The defendant is being held in Ft. Meyers awaiting extradition to Chester County.

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<sup>1</sup> A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

West Whiteland Police and Florida Department of Law Enforcement are investigating. Deputy District Attorney Erin O'Brien is the assigned prosecutor.

If you have any information about this case, please call Detective Michael Buchmann at 610-363-0200. Call Childline at 1-800-932-0313 if you suspect a child or student is being abused.

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Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney