

Mother 'was offered blood money'

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A MOTHER from a strict Jewish community told Southwark crown court yesterday that she was offered hundreds of thousands of pounds to stop her childrengiving evidence against two men accused of abusing them.

The woman, who cannot be named because it would identify her children, said it would have been 'blood money'.

She rejected an allegation that she negotiated with members of her community who did not want her to go to the police. The mother told the court: 'I have been personally offered money to go away. I say to people that, even if I was offered a million pounds, we would not go away.'

When it was suggested she had negotiated a pounds 250,000 fee for keeping her children out of court, the woman said: 'No. It would be blood money for the children's suffering.'

Philip Eli Cohen, aged 18, a student, of Stamford Hill, north London, denies one charge of buggery and 13 charges of indecently assaulting the woman's 12-year-old son, and four offences of indecently assaulting her six-year-old daughter.

A community police liaison officer, Jonathan Rosenthal, aged 40, also of Stamford Hill, denies three charges of indecently assaulting the girl and one similar offence against the boy.

The alleged assaults began in 1986, when the boy was seven and the girl 1 1/2 .

The court has been told that Mr Rosenthal comes from a famous Jewish family and that his father was a highly esteemed scholar and headmaster.

Mr Rosenthal is the member of the community who liaises with police whenever an Orthodox Jew is in trouble.

The mother told the court she had been 'excommunicated' by other Orthodox Jews and alleged a rabbi had told one of her brothers to lie in court to protect Mr Rosenthal.

She described Mr Rosenthal as a 'dangerous paedophile who nearly murdered little babies'.

Jonathan Goldberg, defending Mr Rosenthal, accused the mother of telling a pack of lies. He put it to her that she was hated by her community.

The trial continues.