

Actor Chris Noth fired from *The Equalizer* television series amid sexual assault claims

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27 December 2021

A #MeToo-style media campaign has been launched against Chris Noth, the American actor best known for his roles in the popular television programs *Law and Order* (1990-1995), *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) and *The Good Wife* (2009-2016).

The effort aimed at destroying Noth follows a familiar pattern. Following a series of anonymous, unsubstantiated allegations, and without any investigation into their veracity, the actor has been dropped by his talent agency and fired from his most recent role on the CBS series *The Equalizer*. His participation in an advertising campaign by exercise equipment maker Peloton has also been cancelled.

The media has transmitted the allegations against Noth in lurid detail, without a hint that these are unproven claims and that none of the accusers' accounts have been seriously examined. They may be a pack of lies for all the media outlets know. The television actor has not been charged with any crime, much less convicted, but his career may already be over.

Noth responded to the claims with a statement, "The accusations against me made by individuals I met years, even decades, ago are categorically false. These stories could've been from 30 years ago or 30 days ago—no always means no—that is a line I did not cross. The encounters were consensual. It's difficult not to question the timing of these stories coming out. I don't know for certain why they are surfacing now, but I do know this: I did not assault these women." His comments are ignored by the media or dismissed out of hand.

As in the past, this latest campaign against "sexual misconduct" must be viewed within the broader political and social context. The effort to cancel the career of an alleged perpetrator of sexual assault has a

great deal to do with manipulating the public with a right-wing attack on basic democratic rights and nothing to do with protecting the rights of women or rape victims.

So far, at least five women have made public statements accusing the actor of "rape," "assault," "pretty forcibly" having sex, "toxic behavior" and "groping" during encounters they say occurred between 2002 and 2015.

The first two accusations were published by the *Hollywood Reporter* (THR) on December 16. THR says the recent launch of the HBO series *And Just Like That*, a sequel to *Sex and the City*, in which Noth reprises his role as Mr. Big, was a "triggering event" for the two women who used the pseudonyms Zoe and Lily to tell their stories.

Zoe, now 40, was 22 when she met the actor in 2004 while working in Los Angeles at "a high-profile firm where Noth and other celebrities regularly had business." Zoe says Noth invited her "to the pool at a building in West Hollywood where he had an apartment." A friend of Zoe's confirmed that she had gone to the pool and was "sitting with Zoe and Noth in the jacuzzi." Zoe claims that Noth assaulted her in his apartment 17 years ago.

In the case of Lily, now 31, she was 25 when she met Noth in a New York City nightclub. Lily says she was "truly-star stuck" that he was "hitting on" her and she was "flattered." She went on, "I knew he was married, which is shameful of me to admit." They went to dinner and Noth invited Lily to his Greenwich Village apartment to sample some "collection of whiskeys" and "talk about his acting career." Lily also claims that Noth forced himself on her.

A friend says Lily told her about what happened and that Noth had "pretty forcibly" had sex with her. When

the friend suggested she call the police, “Lily wouldn’t hear of it” and now doesn’t remember the conversation. Meanwhile, text messaging between Noth and Lily continued for two months in 2015 where the encounter between the two was being discussed. *THR* reports that “Lily continued to respond in a friendly but noncommittal way. At one point, she agreed to dinner, then canceled. She continued to put him off, and they never met again.”

While there is more than enough information in the *THR* report to raise serious questions about the allegations against Noth, this did not prevent the media from encouraging and publicizing the claims of additional accusers.

On December 18, the *Daily Beast* published the comments of “Ava” who was 18 when she was working as a hostess and Broadway show tunes singer at a New York City restaurant where she met Noth in 2010. *The Daily Beast* report goes on, “She was getting the attention of Noth, whom she’d watched as the iconic character of Big on *Sex and the City*: ‘I remember how electrifying his hand, the hand I watched hold Carrie Bradshaw in *Sex and the City*, felt grabbing me.’” Ava said the unwanted groping continued that evening.

The *Daily Beast* contacted Noth’s publicist who said the actor, “denies this as ever happening and has no idea who this woman is.”

As noted above, on the basis of these unproven claims spread by the media with glee, Noth’s career is essentially finished. On December 20, during the CBS Evening News, the network announced that Noth would no longer appear in its drama series *The Equalizer* in which the actor has performed in 18 episodes. CBS and Universal Television said in a joint statement that, “Chris Noth will no longer film additional episodes of *The Equalizer*, effective immediately.”

On December 23, the *Independent* published an essay by Heather Kristin, a stand-in for Kristin Davis on *Sex and the City*, who said that Noth “slid his hand down my back and over my butt” and was guilty of “toxic behavior” on the set of the TV series. Also on December 23, country-pop singer Lisa Gentile alleged that she was “forcibly groped” by Noth nearly 20 years ago.

It is indeed paradoxical that accusations of boorish

behavior by Noth on the set of *Sex and the City* would be the subject of a semi-puritanical campaign given that the six seasons of the HBO series from 1998 to 2004 were, more or less, an ongoing showcase of sexuality, promiscuity and libidinous behavior among the upper middle class in New York City by both men and women.

Significantly, the other cast members of *Sex and the City* refused the opportunity to either defend their costar or even remain silent on the matter. Reflecting the McCarthyite witch-hunting atmosphere in Hollywood where the Bill of Rights does not apply when allegations of sexual abuse are made, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon issued a statement on Instagram on December 20 that said, “We are deeply saddened to hear the allegations against Chris Noth. We support the women who have come forward and shared their painful experiences. We know it much [sic] be a very difficult thing to do and we commend them for it.” Apparently, without a second thought, the three actresses have thrown Noth—whose presence in the series contributed to their careers and incomes—to the wolves.



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