

The welcome reappearance of actor Kevin Spacey

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The appearance once again of American actor Kevin Spacey in the media and the strong statements by numerous fellow actors supporting him are both welcome, long overdue developments.

Spacey has given lengthy interviews for the first time in years, and performers Liam Neeson, Sharon Stone, F. Murray Abraham and others have demanded that the award-winning actor be brought back into filmmaking.

In late October 2017, as part of the nascent #MeToo witch-hunt, Spacey was accused of a sexual impropriety that allegedly took place at a party in 1986—more than 30 years previously. This one unsubstantiated claim, which when tested in a courtroom five years later took a jury 45 minutes to dismiss, led to Spacey being driven out of the film, television and theater world.

One of the finest actors of his generation, Spacey was fired from the Netflix series *House of Cards*, in which his portrayal of conniving politician Frank Underwood had made him virtually a household name. Later, to add injury to insult, the producers of *House of Cards* sued Spacey on the grounds that his alleged sexual misconduct had caused Season 6 of the series to be shortened from 13 episodes to eight, and they were therefore entitled to \$31 million in damages!

Spacey's publicist severed ties with the actor at the same time, and his talent agency, Creative Artists Agency, also dropped him.

Disgracefully, director Ridley Scott and Imperative Entertainment excised Spacey out of the already completed *All the Money in the World* and reshot his scenes with Christopher Plummer. In general, official Hollywood instinctively responded to the #MeToo charges as it did to the anti-communist scare of the 1940s and 1950s, with utter spinelessness and lack of principle.

Not to be outdone, the management of The Old Vic theater in London reported that its own investigation had uncovered various cases of alleged inappropriate behavior. This was Spacey's reward for his work as Old Vic artistic director between 2004 and 2025, helping the theater to survive. None

of this ever came to anything, except The Old Vic administrators' proving themselves to be sneaks and cowards. In July 2023, a jury in London found Spacey innocent on all charges related to the alleged sexual assault of four men.

The attempt by the state of Massachusetts to bring a sexual assault charge against Spacey fell apart ignominiously in 2019, when the accuser refused to testify, pleading the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination. As we noted at the time, the case “reeked of a politically motivated vendetta from the start.” The allegation was “launched with great fanfare in November 2018 by [the accuser’s] mother, Heather Unruh, a former local news anchor, at a widely publicized press conference in Boston. Unruh proclaimed that she ‘wanted to see Kevin Spacey go to jail. I want to have the hand of justice come down on him.’”

Spacey has been vindicated on all fronts, but the Hollywood film industry, terrified of the #MeToo campaign and its well-to-do, well-connected advocates, has been reluctant to hire the actor.

Now, Channel 4 in the UK has put out a disgraceful contribution to his persecution, *Spacey Unmasked*, which the WSWS will comment on separately.

In a May 16 interview with Chris Cuomo on NewsNation, Spacey pointed out that “I’ve paid a price … seven years is a very long time.” He suggested that his situation was “beginning to move in a direction that is much more positive.” Spacey further asserted that “I just want to get back to work … I feel like I’ve got so much to offer.”

He told Cuomo that the US was a country that “believes in due process and believes in the rule of law, and fairness.” Spacey suggested that the #MeToo “pendulum” had “swung very, very far in the direction of unfairness.”

Asked about his own responsibility, the actor responded, “I accept my accountability … [but] I’m not going to be accountable for things I didn’t do or that were exaggerated or greatly changed.”

And if Hollywood did not let him back in?

“I don’t think that an executive, no matter how powerful,

at any company, should speak for the entire American public, or the entire British public,” Spacey insisted to Cuomo. The public “stop me all the time,” he went on. “I travel all over the world. ... Everyone who stops me, every single day, is generous and happy to see me, and if there’s a theme to any of our conversations it’s ‘When are you getting back to work?’”

In the interview, Spacey expressed his gratitude to the fellow actors and others who were now speaking out on his behalf.

The *Daily Telegraph* in the UK on May 15 posted an article along these lines, noting that “the two-time Oscar winner has been effectively blacklisted by the film and theatre industry since 2017 despite being cleared by courts in the UK and the US of allegations of sexual assault.”

In a series of statements made to the *Telegraph*, prominent actors and directors defended Spacey and opposed his “blacklisting.” Neeson explained, for example, that he was “deeply saddened to learn of these accusations against him.” Spacey, he continued, was “a good man and a man of character. He’s sensitive, articulate and non-judgemental, with a terrific sense of humour. He is also one of our finest artists in the theatre and on camera. Personally speaking, our industry needs him and misses him greatly.”

Stone indicated she couldn’t wait “to see Kevin back at work. He is a genius. He is so elegant and fun, generous to a fault and knows more about our craft than most of us ever will.”

Academy Award-winner F. Murray Abraham told the *Telegraph* he considered Spacey a friend, adding, “I vouch for him unequivocally. Who are these vultures who attack a man who has publicly accepted his responsibility for certain behaviour, unlike so many others?” Abraham said that he stood with Spacey, “and let he who is without sin cast the first stone.”

Actor Stephen Fry suggested that Spacey’s reputation had already been “wrecked,” and added: “Surely it is wrong to continue to batter a reputation on the strength of assertion and rhetoric rather than evidence and proof? ... Unless I’m missing something I think he has paid the price.”

Sir Trevor Nunn, former artistic director of both the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre, who directed Spacey in two productions at The Old Vic, described the latter as “an actor of genius, on stage and on screen.”

The reemergence and even possible “rehabilitation” of Spacy has objective significance.

As we noted in 2020, the McCarthyite sexual misconduct campaign, including the persecution of Spacey, was a malignant product of the Democratic Party and their “left” orbit in the wake of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 election defeat,

which only polluted the atmosphere and drove politics farther to the right. These political forces “needed to distract attention from their electoral fiasco, regroup and galvanize their shocked and demoralized middle class supporters and direct them along right-wing, identity politics lines. This was never about the rights and conditions of working women.” This process has now largely played itself out.

After all, where do we stand seven years later? As vice president under Barack Obama, Joe Biden associated himself in particular with the cause of opposing “violence against women.” In January 2014, Obama named Biden a co-chair of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. Biden intervened provocatively in the case of Stanford University student Brock Turner in 2016, coming out openly against the presumption of innocence.

However, Biden’s posturing as a zealous defender of women against violence has collided with the realities of his position as the leader of the most dangerous and murderous imperialist power on the planet. He has approved and indeed presided over the slaughter of more than 10,000 women in the Gaza Strip. With their bleeding corpses very much in the public eye, “Genocide Joe” is no longer likely to be held up, except by his most abject apologists, as a standard bearer for women’s rights.

The Democratic Party administration is up to its elbows in blood in Gaza, bays for war with Iran, arms and incites the fascistic Zelensky regime in Ukraine and stridently positions itself for open conflict with China. Under these conditions, the ability of the Democrats and various “left” movements clinging to their coattails to associate themselves with anything remotely “progressive” has been sharply undermined. The #MeToo campaign has been largely discredited in the process.

For our part, we stand by what we wrote in 2017: “We don’t make any bones about our sympathy with Kevin Spacey and our contempt for those inciting denunciations and urging on the witch-hunting hysteria.”



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