The Daily Telegraph, Friday, December 01, 2017, pages from 1 to 1

UNSCRIPTED DRAMA: THE OSCAR STAR SCANDAL

I was in the show. I believe (her)

STC actor Meyne Wyatt

WE'RE WITH YOU

Theatre cast back accuser as Rush denies ‘touching’

JONATHAN MORAN

TWO Sydney Theatre Company actors yesterday spoke out in support of the actress who has accused Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush of touching her inappropriately during the stage production of King Lear.

Rush – one of Australia’s biggest stars – was yesterday continuing to vigorously deny the claims.

Meyne Reed Wyatt, who also appeared in King Lear, said he believed the allegations. ‘I believe the person who has come forward. It’s time for Sydney Theatre Company and the industry in Australia and worldwide as a whole to make a stand,’ Wyatt said.

And Brandon McClelland, who has worked alongside the actress, urged others to believe the complaints. ‘It wasn’t a misunderstanding,” he said.

Two STC sources said the company stood by its claim.

Rush last night said the STC had reviewed policies about “inappropriate behaviour”.

SIXTY FREE DEGREES

HIGH-achieving students will be given free university degrees and a $7000-a-year payment in exchange for spending three years teaching in rural areas as part of a radical push to get better teachers in rural areas as the government fights to maintain a political grip on crucial country electorates.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO GOVERNMENT’S TAX CUTS

OPP of the state’s power fat cats has sparked anger after it was revealed he has pocketed a $172,000 pay rise as rocketing bills leave families struggling to keep the lights on. Essential Energy chief executive John Cleland has taken home $282,250 even as his own company described its service reliability as “unacceptable”.

FORMER Premier Mike Baird played a key role in convincing the Turnbull government to agree to a royal commission into the big banks. As Mr Baird and his now-his NAS chair Ken Henry get the banks in order, Treasurer Scott Morrison also had a call with Reserve Bank governor Philip Lowe that reversed his position.

TOP KIDS GO BUSH

HIGH-achieving students will be given free university degrees and a $7000-a-year payment in exchange for spending three years teaching in the NSW bush.

REVEALED

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The Old Vic Theatre on The Cut in London.

**HR overhaul to lift curtain on bad deeds**

By JOHANNA ROBAN

THE Sydney Theatre Company has evaded its HR policies in order to ensure it maintains a safe environment for staff.

Executive director of the STC Patrick McIntyre (below) said it was important actors feel safe to speak up and believe maintenance of confidentiality is key to the workplace.

"We have reviewed policies and procedures in place and that includes educating actors when they come in to the company about our intolerance of inappropriate behaviour, who they should speak to and encouraging them to speak up," Mr McIntyre said.

Mr McIntyre's comments come after the STC confirmed it had received a complaint by a staff member over allegations of "inappropriate behaviour" by Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush, brushing aside denials of wrongdoing.

Mr McIntyre stressed that he and the rest of the team at the theatre company "have the duty of care to ensure all staff feel safe and respected in the workplace.

"This isn't about creating drama and blaming if everyone has a role to play. We are all part of the same team, the artistic and business side to make a stand on this behaviour.

"It was important actors feel safe to speak up and believe maintenance of confidentiality is key to the workplace.

"The HR overhaul follows preliminary findings of an Actors Equity survey aimed at examining issues such as "inappropriate behaviour".

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DEFIANCE

STATEMENT FROM GEOFFREY RUSH

"The moment I became aware of rumours of a complaint I immediately phoned and spoke to senior management at the Sydney Theatre Company asking for clarification about the details of the statement. They refused to illumine me with the details... I also asked why this information was being withheld, and why, according to standard theatre practice the issue had not been raised with me during the production via stage management, the director, my fellow actors or anyone at management level. However, no response was forthcoming."

Sydney Theatre Company was asked by a News Corp journalist earlier this month whether it had received a complaint alleging inappropriate behaviour by Mr Rush while he was employed by the company. STC responded truthfully that it had received such a complaint.

EXEC'S EXILE FOR STAR

EXECUTIVES at the Sydney Theatre Company yesterday came forward in support of the woman at the heart of the Geoffrey Rush scandal, saying they wholeheartedly believe her claims.

They also said due to the seriousness of the allegations, the award-winning theatre company would not work with the Pirates of the Caribbean star again. "There is no chance," the source told The Daily Telegraph.

STC complied, acting in the interest of the company, the STC yesterday said that it had responded "truthfully" after being approached by The Daily Telegraph earlier this week.

It also clarified the anonymity nature of the alleged complainant, who had "requested the matter be dealt with confidentially, and did not want Mr Rush notified or involved in any inquiry.

"STC complied, acting in the interest of the complainant's health and welfare," Mr McNabb last night said the STC had "reviewed policies and procedures" including "educating actors when they come in to the company about our intolerance of inappropriate behaviour, who they should speak to and encouraging them to speak up."

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How could we work with him again? That question doesn't even need an answer," the executive added. "Another actor backed what she said... we've taken this very seriously." A high-profile actor, who did not want to be named, came forward to support the woman.