



Actor Geoffrey Rush arrives at The Federal Court today. Picture: Flavio Brancalione

NSW

Geoffrey Rush says he has been a hermit apart from trips to LA, Italy and UK

Matthew Berns and Lucy Hughes Jones, The Daily Telegraph
October 24, 2018 2:09pm



HOLLYWOOD star Geoffrey Rush said he has lived a "hermit like existence" for the last year despite taking trips to London, Italy, Los Angeles and the Adelaide Festival.

"It's not really a hermit like existence, is it Mr Rush?" Asked barrister Tom Blackburn, SC, during cross examination in the actor's defamation trial against The Daily Telegraph.

"It was a hermit-like existence, generally, for that long period in time," the 67-year-old actor said.



Actor Geoffrey Rush, who is suing The Daily Telegraph for defamation after it reported his co-star in a Sydney Theatre Company production of King Lear lodged a complaint with the STC over Mr Rush's "inappropriate behaviour". Picture: Flavio Brancalione

Mr Blackburn said: "Except for when you went to awards ceremonies and festivals?"

Mr Rush is suing The Daily Telegraph after it reported an actor in King Lear had lodged a complaint with the Sydney Theatre Company over his "inappropriate behaviour". The actor was later named as Eryn Jean Norvill.

Since the articles were published Mr Rush said he and wife Jane Menelaus "were trapped into a reclusive" existence.

In an affidavit supplied to the court in April Mr Rush's solicitor Nick Pullen said his client was "virtually housebound."

Under cross-examination Mr Rush told the court he had spent two weeks in Umbria, Italy, on holiday, eight days in London which included trips to the theatre and to restaurants with friends, a 48-hour round trip to Los Angeles and three days at the Adelaide Festival in March.



FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

EXHIBIT ~~467~~: EXHIBIT 467
RUSH v NATIONWIDE
FILE NO: NSD 2179 OF 2017
RETURN TO: A
ASSOCIATE: CA
DATE: 30/10/2018 WIGNEY J



Geoffrey Rush's barrister Bruce McClintock, SC. Picture: Flavio Brancaleone

"Jane would say let me cook you a steak and I said 'I have no appetite darling, I'll eat when I'm ready'," he said.

The Oscar winner denies any wrongdoing and claims two front page articles in the newspaper about the alleged incident during the STC production painted him as a "pervert" and "sexual predator".

Ms Norvill played Cordelia, the daughter of Mr Rush's character King Lear, whose "lifeless" body he carried onto the stage. Mr Rush denied intentionally groping her breast on stage during the last scene of the play.

The Hollywood star also denied deliberately tracing his fingers across Ms Norvill's breast, saying he had wanted to feel the silhouette of her character's lifeless torso, adding it was "the interior of my palms wanting to feel the loss of her soul".

"Did a thumb accidentally touch the lower part of her chest? Possibly. I wasn't monitoring this with detachment," Mr Rush said.

He said when watching contemporary ballet he never wonders if the dancers are having backstage conversations about inappropriate touching.



Australian director Neil Armfield (left) arrives at the Federal Court. Picture: AAP Image/Brendan Esposito

"I think we should not be heading in a direction in theatre where we're being so straightjacketed," Mr Rush said.

Mr Blackburn said while Mr Rush and Ms Norvill was waiting in the wings for the crucial final scene Mr Rush gently stroked his hand above the line of Ms Norvill's jeans until she very quietly said "please stop that".

"I have no recollection of that happening at all," he said.

Mr Rush also denied director Neil Armfield had told him to make the gesture more paternal because it was becoming "creepy and unclear".

The newspaper argues the stories published on November 30 and December 1 last year draw on allegations made by Ms Norvill and are true.

The hearing continues.

Rush admits he may have called actor 'scrumptious' and 'yummy'

Geoffrey Rush admitted he may have called King Lear co-star Eryn Jean Norvill "scrumptious" and "yummy" during rehearsals for the play a court heard today.

Mr Rush, 67, was being cross examined in his defamation trial against The Daily Telegraph after it reported an actor in King Lear had lodged a complaint with the Sydney Theatre Company over his "inappropriate behaviour". The stories later named as Eryn Jean Norvill



Actor Geoffrey Rush. Picture: Flavio Brancalone

Mr Rush said: "I don't recall saying that but I may have said that. I was always in a very chirpy mood ... sometimes you have ice breakers with people you don't know very well. I approached the rehearsals with openness and energy."

The Pirates of the Caribbean star said he might have called her yummy. "I might have, yes. 'Yummy' has a spirit to it."

In a pre-trial hearing, the court was told that Ms Norvill would give evidence that she was the target of sexual harassment during the King Lear season including an incident during a preview in which Mr Rush ran his hand "down her torso and traced across her right breast".

In the Federal Court today Mr Rush denied making grunting noises while sticking out his tongue and tracing an hour glass figure in the air around Ms Norvill.

He also denied that was the reason Ms Norvill said "Daaaad" like a grumpy teenager and asked him to stop.

The court was previously given a copy of a text Mr Rush sent to Ms Norvill with a winking emoji with its tongue "panting".

Mr Blackburn asked the actor: "If someone who is 65 years old sent your daughter a text, saying 'I'm thinking of you more than is socially appropriate' with an emoji with its tongue hanging out, Mr Rush would you think that's appropriate?"

Mr Rush, who has a 25-year-old daughter, said: "I can't think of any context in which that would happen."

He said he does not check his daughter's emails or Facebook.





Actor Geoffrey Rush arrives at The Federal Court today. Photo: Flavio Brancalano

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Actor Geoffrey Rush, who is suing The Daily Telegraph for defamation after it reported his co-star in a Sydney Theatre Company production of King Lear lodged a complaint with the STC over Mr Rush’s “inappropriate behaviour”. Photo: Flavio Brancalano

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Mr Rush is suing The Daily Telegraph after it reported an actor in King Lear had lodged a complaint with the Sydney Theatre Company over his “inappropriate behaviour”. The actor was later named as Eryn Jean Norvill.

Since the articles were published Mr Rush said he and wife Jane Menelaus “were trapped into a reclusive” existence.

In an affidavit supplied to the court in April Mr Rush’s solicitor Nick Pullen said his client was “virtually housebound.”

Under cross-examination Mr Rush told the court he had spent two weeks in Umbria, Italy, on holiday, eight days in London which included trips to the theatre and to restaurants with friends, a 48-hour round trip to Los Angeles and three days at the Adelaide Festival in March.

Mr Rush said he also went to “the shop and the post office” to buy avocados to have on toast because he knew he “had to have something”.



Geoffrey Rush's barrister Bruce McClintock, SC. Picture: Flavio Brancaleone

"Jane would say let me cook you a steak and I said 'I have no appetite darling, I'll eat when I'm ready,'" he said.

The Oscar winner denies any wrongdoing and claims two front page articles in the newspaper about the alleged incident during the STC production painted him as a "pervert" and "sexual predator".

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Tom Blackburn, SC, barrister for The Daily Telegraph asked Mr Rush if he said to Ms Norvill "you're looking very scrumptious today" during rehearsals.



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Originally published as [Rush says he has been a hermit apart from LA, Italy and UK trips](#)



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Section: News

Rush: I've been a hermit

MATTHEW BENNS and LUCY HUGHES JONES

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Region: (Australasia (1AU56); Australia (1AU55); Oceania (1OC40); South Australia (1SO82))

ACTRESS TEXTS 'DEAR GIRL ARE YOU OK?'

MATTHEW BENNS & LUCY HUGHES JONES

ACTRESS Robyn Nevin sent a text message to her King Lear co-star Eryn Jean Norvill as soon as she heard about anonymous allegations of "inappropriate behaviour" by Geoffrey Rush.

Ms Nevin, who played The Fool in the Sydney Theatre Company production, sent a message on December 1 last year saying: "Oh dear girl, are you okay?... it's nasty. I hope you are protected. I'm sure you will be."

Mr Rush, 67, is suing The Daily Telegraph over a series of articles published the same week which reported that a young actress had lodged a sexual harassment complaint against him. The actress was later named as Ms Norvill, who played Mr Rush's daughter Cordelia in the production. Ms Norvill later replied to Ms Nevin's text, writing: "There are many stories not just mine. But I'm fairly alone right now.

"Here I am, in the eye of the storm. I just want to do my job and feel safe."

In a pre-trial hearing, the Federal Court was told Ms Norvill would give evidence that Mr Rush ran his hand "down her torso and traced across her right breast" on stage.

Ms Nevin told the court she could not recall exactly when she heard that it was Ms Norvill who had made the allegations.

She texted Ms Norvill the day after the first story was published even though the article did not name the complainant.

Ms Nevin confirmed she and Ms Norvill had appeared in another STC production together when the younger actress confided in her that "being back here reminds me of the stuff, trouble with Geoffrey".

The newspaper's barrister Tom Blackburn, SC, asked her if she said to Ms Norvill: "Oh, I thought Geoffrey had stopped doing that. Poor Jane." Ms Nevin denied saying that.

Mr Rush denies any wrongdoing and claims the articles published on November 30 and December 1 painted him as a "pervert" and "sexual predator".

The newspaper argues the two stories draw on allegations made by Ms Norvill and are true.



Geoffrey Rush arrives at court yesterday and (left) actress Robyn Nevin who gave evidence at the hearing. Main Picture: Dylan Robinson

Abuse victims dying to be paid

EXCLUSIVE
JANET FIFE-YEOMANS

ONLY a handful of child sex abuse victims who bravely told their stories to the royal commission have so far received compensation from the \$3.8 billion national redress fund.

It is already too late for one man, who was sexually abused in a Sydney boys' home and died last week, aged 82, with his application for compensation still mired in the bureaucracy.

Another, Tony Duffy, who was abused in Salvation Army homes, is fighting terminal liver cancer with only weeks to live, The Daily Telegraph can today reveal.

"It is tragic," head of Care Leavers Australasia Network Leonie Sheedy said yesterday. "They are putting up brick walls and people are dying."

The redress scheme has paid out just \$445,000 since it began to accept claims on July 1, despite 150 people working for it across two federal bureaucracies — the Department of Social Security and the Department of Human Services.

The highest payout was \$100,000 and the lowest \$50,000, with offers made to fewer than 10 people and not all of them accepting, Social Services confirmed yesterday.

The 44-page application form for compensation includes 61 questions, and a decision to slash the maximum payouts available from \$200,000 to \$150,000 has been slammed by survivors.

After decades battling to get anyone to believe them or take any action despite reporting the abuse, victims have been let down by the compensation scheme, said Ms Sheedy, whose group represents people raised in orphanages, children's homes and foster care.

"The fund seems to be institution-focused and not survivor-focused," Ms Sheedy,

who was herself abused while in care at the Sisters of Mercy St Catherine's Children's home in Geelong, said.

"It has turned into a very unfriendly experience."

She said they had heard Prime Minister Scott Morrison's apology but felt they were still fighting for redress.

The 82-year-old who died last week in NSW had told the royal commission he was physically and sexually abused from the age of five while in the Royleston Boys' Home in Glebe during the 1940s.

His family has requested privacy as they prepare for his funeral.

Karen Duffy, whose husband Tony, 54, has been told he has only months to live with terminal liver cancer, said it was a struggle. He put in his application on July 2.

"He is hanging on as much as he can because he wants to get some closure for this," Ms Duffy said.

There are an estimated 60,000 survivors who experienced child sexual abuse in the nation's institutions including more than 16,000 who told their stories to the royal commission.

The National Redress Scheme will run for 10 years.

Newcastle-based lawyer Peter Kelso who has represented many victims of child abuse described the scheme as an "obstacle course".

Institutions that have joined the scheme include the Commonwealth, all state and territory governments and major churches and charities including the Catholic, Anglican and Uniting churches, the Salvation Army, the YMCA and Scouts Australia.

A Social Security spokeswoman said it identified priority cases including people who were elderly or very ill and if someone died after putting in their claim, the money could be paid to their estate.

BONES HALT WORK

SYDNEY'S embattled light rail project has hit more track trouble after workers stumbled across human bones during work outside Central Station yesterday.

The \$2.1 billion project was forced to a halt as police investigated the grisly discovery; however the incident is not being treated as suspicious as the bones are now believed to have been remains from the Devonshire Street Cemetery which was consecrated in 1820.

Archaeologists will be brought in to examine the site for any more human remains.



The building ablaze.

Crop goes to pot in carpark blaze

DERRICK KRUSCHE

A HYDROPONIC drug den was discovered after a fire ripped through a valet carparking business near Sydney Airport yesterday.

Firefighters arrived to find flames shooting out of the building in which a number of luxury cars, including a red Ferrari, were parked inside on O'Riordan St at Mascot

just after 4am. After the blaze was extinguished, crews uncovered the hydroponic cannabis crop hidden in a "rabbit warren of rooms" on the second storey of the building.

It is understood a 36-year-old man had been living on the second level for a number of months.

He was out when the fire erupted and returned home at 7am before reporting the incident to police.

A neighbour said the valet car premises used to be a brothel.

NSW Police Inspector Darrin Laing said officers would inspect the crop once firefighters deemed the scene safe.

"Hydroponic setups can be quite dangerous, normally they involve electricity bypassing, which makes it very unsafe and very unstable," he said.