



Award-winning film “Conspiracy of Silence” re-released to mark its 20th Anniversary

London, Wednesday 27 September 2023 – award-winning feature film CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE written and directed by John Deery for London’s Joejack Entertainment and starring Academy Award-winner Brenda Fricker (*‘My Left Foot’*), Hugh Bonneville (*‘Downton Abbey’*), Chris O’Dowd (*‘Bridesmaids’*), John Lynch (*‘Sliding Doors’*) and Sean McGinley (*‘Braveheart’*) has been fully remastered and is being re-released digitally this September in the UK, Ireland, North America, Australia and New Zealand to mark its 20th Anniversary.

The story, meticulously researched and inspired by real events, looks at the vow of celibacy in the Catholic Church and asks is it now time to allow priests to marry: a can of worms is opened in the Irish Catholic Church following the suicide of Catholic priest, Fr. Frank Sweeney, and the expulsion of Daniel McLaughlin, a young seminarian training for the priesthood, on the grounds that he was open to the sexual advances of a male colleague. A local journalist, David Foley, is convinced that the suicide and Daniel’s expulsion are linked. As the story gathers momentum, the Church closes ranks.

CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE was developed at the Sundance Screenwriters’ Lab and is a well-reviewed film, winning the National Board of Review’s Freedom of Expression Award, shared with Michael Moore for *‘Fahrenheit 9/11’* and Mel Gibson for *‘The Passion of the Christ’*. Jeffrey Lyons of WNBC/ New York called the film “Extremely powerful and superbly acted.”

Deery won the prestigious Hartley-Merrill International Screenwriting Award and was nominated for Best Film Director at the Irish Film and Television Awards.

The restored film is being distributed by London-based Bohemia Euphoria, a new film streaming and livestream platform from Bohemia Media, founded by Phil Hunt and Lucy Fenton. Hunt comments: *“We are excited to be releasing this film on VOD platforms in the UK, Ireland, North America, Australia and New Zealand, initially to buy or rent on Amazon and Apple, with a view to expanding to more territories worldwide. The film is still relevant today and will attract new audiences that it never had a chance to reach back in 2003.”*

In the 20 years since the original release of the film, the Roman Catholic Church has not settled the ongoing priestly celibacy debate and has been marred in many controversies worldwide relating to sex and sexuality. Earlier this year Pope Francis hinted in an interview that he might lift the celibacy requirements for priests, saying: *“There is no contradiction for a priest to marry. Celibacy in the western Church is a temporary prescription. It is not eternal like priestly ordination, which is forever, whether you like it or not. Whether you leave or not is another matter, but it is forever. On the other hand, celibacy is a discipline.”*

Deery comments: *“20 years on, the themes I explored in CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE are just as relevant today, if not more so, than then. In many ways the story was ahead of its time, but fundamentally nothing has changed in the Catholic Church. I personally know many priests who are in gay relationships, as well as priests who are in relationships with women. Celibacy is a time bomb waiting to go off and the Church needs to deal with it. Over 100,000 priests have left the priesthood in the past 25 years, celibacy being one of the main reasons.”*

The film is available now on: [iTunes UK](#), [iTunes US](#), [iTunes AUS](#), [iTunes NZ](#), [Amazon UK](#), [Amazon US](#), [Bohemia Euphoria](#)

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Stills and artwork can be downloaded [here](#). (set photos by Nick Wall, copyright Joejack Entertainment Ltd)

Notes to editors:

John Deery / Joejack Entertainment: - www.joejackentertainment.com

Deery is an award-winning British/Irish film director, who established his film production company, Joejack Entertainment, based at the iconic Twickenham Studios (London, England). He began his career as an actor working in theatre and television and started in the film industry as a runner on commercials working with many top directors. He attended the UK's prestigious National Film & Television School.

Deery's first feature film, *'Conspiracy of Silence'*, which he wrote and directed, stars Academy Award-winner Brenda Fricker (*'My Left Foot'*), Hugh Bonneville (*'Downton Abbey'*) and Chris O'Dowd (*'Bridesmaids'*). *'Conspiracy of Silence'* was developed at the Sundance Screenwriters' Lab and is a well-reviewed film, winning the National Board of Review's Freedom of Expression Award, shared with Michael Moore for *'Fahrenheit 9/11'* and Mel Gibson for *'The Passion of the Christ'*. Jeffrey Lyons of WNBC/ New York called the film "Extremely powerful and superbly acted." He won the prestigious Hartley-Merrill International Screenwriting Award and was nominated for Best Film Director at the Irish Film and Television Awards.

For British television he has directed two 90-min 'specials' of the popular comedy-drama series, *'Fat Friends'*, starring Alison Steadman, Ruth Jones and James Corden; a feature length episode of *'The Brief'*, starring Alan Davies; and a 2-hour prime-time television film for the ITV network, *'If I Had You'*, starring Sarah Parish – which received excellent notices and achieved impressive viewing figures. He is co-creator and producer of the No.1 children's animation series, *'Underground Ernie'*, for BBC.

Joejack Entertainment is currently in pre-production on "The Rock Pile" – a film set in present-day Jerusalem, about three young boys of different faiths – one Christian, one Jewish, one Muslim – who, feeling trapped by the on-going conflict in Israel, take out their frustrations by throwing rocks at each other from atop mounds of rubble in the Old City, but who come together as friends through football. The film follows a disillusioned TIME Magazine war correspondent, Erin Carter, as she uncovers a compelling story of redemption, reconciliation and hope amidst the boys' fights, football matches and blossoming friendships. To be produced with Celine Rattray and Trudie Styler of Maven Screen Media.

Bohemia Media: - www.bohemiamedia.co.uk

A distribution company focusing on films which give voices to historically marginalised groups that are not well-served within the mainstream culture. Bohemia Media's first film, the 2019 Sundance winner, *Clemency*, utilised a groundbreaking revenue sharing model with cinemas and grassroots organisations and its lead actress, Alfre Woodard, was nominated at the 2021 BAFTAs in the Leading Actress category. Since then, Bohemia has acquired over 70 titles that all focus on helping to give a voice to under-represented groups.

Bohemia Media was founded by Phil Hunt and Lucy Fenton. Hunt's main business is with Head Gear and Bankside Films, as well as a number of other corporate investments in the film sector. He has produced or executive produced over 300 feature films, in the past quarter of a century.