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Fearless: Jim Caviezel Puts It All on the Line

If putting one's life on the line is the supreme measure of commitment, then putting one's career, livelihood, friendships, and reputation on the line runs a close second. Jim Caviezel has done — and is doing — all of these. When Mel Gibson offered him the role of Jesus in the 2004 mega-hit *The Passion of the Christ*, he warned the ascendent actor that it could be the end of his film career, that the anti-Christian backlash in Hollywood and the media would be ferocious.



AP Images

Jim Caviezel with wife, Kerri Browitt Caviezel

Recounting that warning in a 2004 interview with CBN, Caviezel said Gibson told him, “I want you to be aware of what you are going to go through. You may never work again.” He said Gibson repeated that several times publicly. Caviezel continued, “I told him, ‘Mel, this is what I believe. We all have a cross to carry. I have to carry my own cross. If we don’t carry our crosses, we are going to be crushed under the weight of it. So, let’s go and do it.’ And we began with the film.”

The events that soon followed proved that Mel Gibson’s monitory was no exaggeration; the vicious reputational attacks on Caviezel severely curtailed his career trajectory, transforming him from rising star to industry pariah. (More on that below.) The film also almost killed him — literally. It is well known that he was struck by lightning while portraying Christ delivering his Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps worse was enduring endless hours of bone-chilling cold while hanging nearly naked on the cross. He contracted pneumonia, dislocated a shoulder, and lost feeling in his arms. He suffered numerous scrapes and bruises and was seriously injured when one of the blows during the scourging scene went awry and actually landed on him, opening a 14-inch gash on his back. Although he is a physically fit athlete, the rigors of *The Passion* took a serious toll on his health that ultimately required two heart surgeries, including open-heart surgery.

With his new movie, *Sound of Freedom*, Caviezel has put his life on the line again, though in a different sense. The physical demands in making the film do not compare to those of his role in Gibson’s *Passion*, but the very real danger of reprisal from the powerful forces promoting and protecting child sex trafficking is nothing to trivialize. The drug cartels, porn cartels, and Deep State actors involved in this burgeoning child-rape industry are the vilest of criminals and will not hesitate to physically eliminate those who jeopardize their growing multibillion-dollar empire. Caviezel has addressed this concern in multiple interviews, but says that these dangers and threats will not cause him to relent in his fight against the child sex traffickers. *Sound of Freedom*, he says, is a launchpad to educate and activate millions of people worldwide to save the children and bring the criminals behind this abominable flesh trade to justice.

“Jesus Is Above All Else”

“I’ve never forgotten that the name of Jesus is above all else,” Caviezel said in a 2017 interview with



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Polish film and culture critic Lukasz Adamski. “It is also the most controversial name of all time,” he continued. “Love is controversial, and He personifies love. Jesus was telling the Romans about love and they killed Him because of that.... He was betrayed by His own people and abandoned by everyone. My duty was not only to show it all on the screen. My real duty is to live in accordance with the gospel every day and to give witness to the truth.”

“When I played Jesus,” he told Adamski, “I prayed a lot. I asked God to show me how I can present Jesus in the most accurate way. How to make the viewers feel closer to Him. How to inspire the viewers. It has been my inner journey which as we can see hasn’t finished yet.” Caviezel, a devout Catholic, says a crucial component of preparation for his role involved the spiritual discipline of going to confession, attending Mass, receiving Holy Communion, and praying the rosary each day during filming of *The Passion of the Christ*. “The role of Jesus was the most difficult endeavor I’ve ever taken up. There is nothing more glorious and at the same time more humbling than this role. Nothing could teach me humility better.”

Adamski pointed out an interesting “coincidence” of facts: “You were 33 years old, your initials were J.C. and you played Jesus.” Caviezel responded with an immediate rebuke to the idea that this was mere happenstance. “Don’t you tell me it was a coincidence!” he replied. “There are no coincidences. I keep on hearing about accidents and strokes of luck. Secularization affects the entire world, also the USA. Only the atheists believe in coincidence. There are no coincidences for God. Even when God resurrects the dead, they will say it happened by an accident.”

In 2007 Caviezel provided the voice of Jesus in *The Word of Promise*, a popular New Testament audio series. “My prayer was I didn’t want people to see me,” he told *Catholic Digest*. “I want people to see Jesus. The only difference between this and a movie is that you have no visual. You hear the lightning strike. You hear the birds chirping. You hear what it might have been like in that time. And it engages your heart and your emotions. And all of a sudden your life begins to change a little bit every day. And you won’t have to tell people whether you’re praying or not; they will know you’re praying. Because I’ll tell you, the difference between that person and someone who does not pray [is that] he has peace and real love. And if you change just a little bit every day, my gosh, you’re going to start experiencing heaven now, not waiting until you die to experience it.”

Attack of the Christophobes

The retribution from the Hollywood elites to Caviezel’s gripping portrayal of Jesus Christ in Gibson’s *Passion* was not long in coming. His stunning performance in that role rightfully should have launched him to mega-stardom. Instead, it had the opposite effect. Just as his acting career was taking off it came crashing down. Like most actors, he had begun learning his craft doing small parts in television and movies. Prior to *The Passion of the Christ*, he had begun garnering critical acclaim and a growing fan base for roles in *Wyatt Earp* (1994), *G.I. Jane* (1997), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), *Frequency* (2000), *Pay It Forward* (2000), *Angel Eyes* (2001), *High Crimes* (2002), *The Count of Monte Cristo* (2002), and *I Am David* (2003).

But *Passion* was radioactive, and not only because of controversies swirling around Mel Gibson at the time. “A lot of people in the industry called me and told me not to do the movie,” Caviezel said on *The Charlie Kirk Show*. “I read the script and everything in the movie was in the Gospels. I began to understand that they don’t like those Gospels. They don’t like it.”



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“All of the sudden I stopped being one of five most popular actors in the studio and I haven’t done anything wrong,” Caviezel told Poland’s Adamski. “I just played Jesus. Was I personally touched by this rejection? Well, everyone has their cross to bear ... but after all, I will not be in this world forever. Neither will the producers from Hollywood. At some point, everyone will have to answer for what they have done.” This focus on “The Four Last Things” (death, judgment, heaven, hell) is central to Caviezel’s worldview and appears again and again in his discussions of his life, work, and motivation. Babylon may have slammed doors in his face, but God opened others for him. Despite his Hollywood banishment, he has starred or co-starred in successful independent films (*Déjà Vu*, *Transit*, *The Stoning of Saroya M*, *Escape Plan*, *Savannah*, *Infidel*, *Paul — Apostle of Christ*) and the highly popular Jonathan Nolan science fiction/crime drama television series *Person of Interest* that ran on CBS for five seasons. And, against all odds, his new blockbuster *Sound of Freedom* not only has been a huge financial success, but also has awakened a huge base for activism against child trafficking.



Sound of Freedom movie poster. (Angel Studios)

Family Man: No On-screen Sex, Please

Everyone knows that “sex sells,” and no place has sold more of it — of every sordid variety — than Hollywood. Passionate kissing, stripping, and sex romping (including simulated coitus) have been standard fare in movies for so long that every new film attempt to stir the *furor sexualis* comes off as just another cheap, tired gimmick drawn from the same exhausted Tinsel Town well by the same depraved, unindicted co-conspirators of Harvey Weinstein. The so-called love scenes (i.e., sex romps) that litter just about every film genre are blatant efforts to shoehorn pornography into every celluloid “entertainment” offering. Even children’s cartoons. Yes, Hollywood is oh-so-tolerant — except when it comes to tolerating actors who refuse to join in the institutionalized debauchery. That’s another reason why Jim Caviezel, in addition to his outspoken Christian faith, is persona non grata today in Babylon.

The actor says that his faith and his marriage preclude him from doing on film what many movie scripts require. “I have a hard time getting naked on film,” Caviezel told *People* magazine. “I don’t believe in it. I don’t think it’s right. In my faith, I’m taught that abstinence is important.... You’re never gonna see my butt on film.” In the 2001 romantic drama *Angel Eyes* with Jennifer Lopez, Caviezel let it be known he wasn’t going to get in the buff with his co-star. “I just said, ‘Look, put a top on her. I’m gonna keep my shorts on, she’s gonna keep hers on. Get the camera and shoot around it.’ And that’s out of devotion,



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love, and respect to my wife.”

He refused to do a sex scene with Ashley Judd in *High Crimes*, a stance that reportedly enraged the director. “I do love scenes — but not ones with gratuitous sex,” Caviezel said. “I also don’t do gratuitous violence. And it’s not just about my wife, although that’s important. It’s sin, pure and simple. I mean, it’s wrong.” Sin? That’s *definitely* a taboo concept to the Sin City sophisticates.

“People [in the entertainment industry] are always saying, ‘Look, I’m not your kid’s role model.’ But that’s wrong. I don’t care how you look at it; we’re all role models. And there’s a responsibility that comes with that,” said Caviezel, echoing a belief that was once universally embraced but is now universally ridiculed by the social, political, and academic elites.

Jim Caviezel and his wife, Kerri, believe in *living* their faith and pro-life convictions. Not only do they publicly oppose abortion, but they have also adopted three abandoned special-needs children from China, two of whom had brain cancer. Being a father has personalized Caviezel’s sense of outrage over child trafficking and heightened his resolve to do something about it.

Time to Fight the Good Fight

“Lukewarm Christianity, that’s not Christianity,” Caviezel declared on *The Charlie Kirk Show*. “And so, we’re the ones who have to lead, because it has to come from the people, and it has to come from a spirit where we’re fearless. And when love comes into the heart at such a level that you would die for it, well, wouldn’t you die for your children at least? Maybe you wouldn’t die for your republic [or] wouldn’t die for your country, O.K., fine, but what about your children? Or would you just hand them over? And so, America and the world, when they see [*Sound of Freedom*], they’re being reawakened because the media has lied too many times, and this is the straw that broke the camel’s back. That’s what you’re seeing right now.”

In preparing for his role in *Sound of Freedom*, he worked intensively with former federal agents who arrest pedophiles and rescue enslaved children. That preparation involved the horrible task of viewing child porn/child sex abuse videos. It gave him “horrible nightmares.” He says he couldn’t sleep for two years after making the film (which was completed five years ago but held captive by Hollywood studios). Caviezel gets emotional, visibly shaken, when he talks about it, as he did in his interview with Charlie Kirk. “The screaming of children,” he begins and then pauses to collect himself. “Well,” he continues, with adamant conviction, “there’s something inside me that says that ain’t going to happen on my watch because I have a father that is inside my heart and I’ll go after these bastards. And it’s OK to do that, and that’s why the line is in there [in Scripture] ‘Better a millstone be hung around their neck and they should be cast into the sea than that they ever hurt one of these little ones.’ And that’s what’s coming for them. It’s going to be a wrath on them. There will be no forgiveness, because this is the rejection of the Holy Spirit. It’s the only unforgivable sin.”

“Only Love Can Save the World”

Tens of millions of moviegoers now eagerly await *Resurrection*, Mel Gibson’s sequel to *The Passion of the Christ*, which has been in development since 2016. Caviezel will again be portraying Jesus in the film. “The thought of doing it again feels like a nightmare,” he told Adamski in 2017. “However, when I come to a country like Poland and see the places of martyrdom and sacrifice, I come to realize that only love can save the world. The love of the Christ. Therefore, I want to work with Gibson again. This



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time it will be a film about the resurrection. If *The Passion of the Christ* inspired so many people to do good, why don't we try again? I feel like there is a purpose in my life again. That's why I've played in a TV series [*Person of Interest*] about a man looking for a purpose for the last five years. I don't do it just for the money. I do it for the love. It's my Christian mission."



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