

Kevin Spacey Found Not Liable in Civil Sexual-Misconduct Case Brought by ‘Rent’ Star Anthony Rapp

Rapp made allegations public five years ago about an alleged encounter in Spacey's home in 1986

WALL STREET JOURNAL

By [Jennifer Calfas](#)

Updated Oct. 20, 2022 6:24 pm ET

A Manhattan jury found Kevin Spacey not liable in a battery claim brought by actor Anthony Rapp, [concluding a two-week civil trial](#) related to sexual-misconduct allegations first made public five years ago.

The federal jury found in favor of Mr. Spacey, who had denied Mr. Rapp's claims he made an unwanted sexual advance decades ago.

Mr. Rapp's case centered on an alleged encounter in Mr. Spacey's home in 1986, when Mr. Rapp was 14 years old and Mr. Spacey was in his 20s. Mr. Rapp alleged Mr. Spacey grabbed his buttocks, placed him on a bed and lay on him without his consent, according to Mr. Rapp's complaint. Mr. Rapp ran to the bathroom and left the home after Mr. Spacey tried to convince him to stay, the complaint said.

The 11-person jury in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York found Mr. Rapp didn't prove by a preponderance of evidence that Mr. Spacey "touched a sexual or intimate part or parts of Mr. Rapp."

"Mr. Spacey is grateful to live in a country where the citizens have a right to trial by impartial jurors who make their decision based on evidence and not rumor or social media," said Jennifer Keller, a lawyer for Mr. Spacey, in a statement.

"Justice was done today," she added.

Mr. Rapp, now 50, brought the case under allegations of battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress and assault. Judge Lewis Kaplan [dismissed the emotional distress claim](#) during the trial and dismissed the assault allegation in June, according to court documents. The jury considered Mr. Rapp's battery claim.

"Anthony told his truth in court," said Richard Steigman, a lawyer representing Mr. Rapp, in a statement following the verdict. "While we respect the jury's verdict, nothing changes that."

Actor Anthony Rapp, right, at the Manhattan federal court on Wednesday.

Mr. Rapp had said the alleged incident caused him severe emotional distress and mental anguish, among other psychological effects, that lasted for decades and affected his career.

The actor, who is best known for his roles on “Star Trek: Discovery” and in the original cast of the Broadway musical “Rent,” first detailed the alleged encounter with Mr. Spacey in a [2017 BuzzFeed article](#).

At the time, Mr. Spacey said he didn’t remember the encounter but said, “if I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior.” The 63-year-old actor has since denied the accusations.

Before the trial began, Mr. Spacey argued that Mr. Rapp’s allegation of assault didn’t constitute sexual assault and therefore wasn’t protected by New York’s 2019 Child Victims Act, which allows people who were victims of sexual assault as children to bring civil claims until they are 55 years old.

Mr. Rapp’s allegations were among the first leveled publicly against Mr. Spacey. After the 2017 BuzzFeed article, [Netflix](#) Inc. said Mr. Spacey [would no longer star](#) in “House of Cards,” the streaming platform’s hit political drama.

Mr. Spacey has since faced several other sexual-misconduct allegations, including an ongoing case in the U.K. In July, Mr. Spacey [pleaded not guilty](#) to charges of sexually assaulting three men in the U.K. He is expected to face trial there next year.

In 2019, Massachusetts prosecutors [dropped a separate criminal case](#) against Mr. Spacey, who was accused of groping a young man at a bar.

Write to Jennifer Calfas at jennifer.calfas@wsj.com