

# Kevin Spacey's attorney takes aim at actor Anthony Rapp in trial opening statements

By [Sonia Moghe](#), CNN

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Jennifer Keller, an attorney for Kevin Spacey, is shown speaking in a courtroom sketch during Spacey's sexual misconduct trial on Thursday.

Christine Cornell

**CNN** — Attorneys for actors Kevin Spacey and Anthony Rapp delivered their opening statements on Thursday, kicking off the court proceedings relating to a civil suit filed by Rapp that accuses the former “House of Cards” star of sexual misconduct.

Rapp, best known for his role in “Star Trek: Discovery,” sued Spacey in 2020 for assault, battery and intentionally inflicting emotional distress.

In 2017, Rapp alleged publicly for the first time that in 1986 Spacey made a sexual advance toward him when Rapp was 14 and they both were performing in Broadway shows.

The suit accuses Spacey of groping Rapp’s buttocks and Spacey of placing the then-teen on a bed and putting his body partially on top of Rapp’s.

An attorney for Spacey addressed Rapp’s allegations of sexual misconduct in court during opening statements, calling his lawsuit an attempt to gain “attention, sympathy and to raise his own profile.”

“He never became the international star that Kevin Spacey did,” said Jennifer Keller, an attorney for Spacey. “He has been simmering and simmering with resentment all this time.”

Peter Saghir, an attorney for Rapp, showed jurors a photo of the actor from the summer of 1986, to show how young he looked around the time Spacey invited the teen to his apartment.

“What happened to Anthony is something that never should have happened. The conduct here involved a 14-year-old boy and a 26-year-old man,” Saghir said.

Rapp is expected to testify at the trial. So is Adam Vary, who broke the story of Rapp’s accusations in 2017 while a reporter at BuzzFeed. Spacey’s attorneys showed text messages between Rapp and Vary, including one where they discussed keeping some details of the story vague so that Spacey could not then “flatly deny” the story.

“This is a case of objective facts refuting the tale that Mr. Rapp tells,” Keller said.

Spacey’s legal team disputes several details of Rapp’s story, including Rapp’s recollection that he saw Spacey appear in a “doorway” at his apartment as a party he had hosted emptied out. Keller showed a floorplan of the apartment Spacey stayed in that showed it was an alcove studio, with no wall near the designated bedroom area.

“Mr. Rapp’s entire story hinges on there being a bedroom.”

Keller alleged that Rapp “borrowed” details from the plot of the Broadway play he was in at the time the alleged incident took place, “Precious Sons,” in his allegations against Spacey.

Spacey publicly apologized shortly after Rapp’s revelation in 2017, tweeting that he was “beyond horrified to hear his story” and said that he did not remember the encounter.

“...If I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior, and I am sorry for the feelings he describes having carried with him all these years,” Spacey said in his tweet at the time.

Saghir told jurors they will hear from Rapp himself about what happened, and that he filed the lawsuit decades after the alleged incident because, for years, he did not know what recourse he had.

“Anthony is looking for justice and for you to say this was wrong. This never should have happened,” Saghir said.

Keller told jurors to focus on proof, and claimed that Rapp did not mention this alleged incident to police, in his memoir or to his therapist of 20 years.

“We’re very confident that once you’ve heard both sides, you’ll be convinced that nothing actually happened at all,” Keller said.

Court will resume Friday morning.