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Rome Film Fest: Orlando Bloom Speaks Out Against Child Abuse in Hollywood



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Ariston Anderson

“A lot of people are being revealed for who they’ve been and what they are and society is now standing up,” said the actor who was in Italy to promote his new film ‘Romans.’

In Orlando Bloom’s new film *Romans*, he plays Malky, a man who was sexually abused as a child. His abuser reappears in his life after he is hired to demolish the church where it all took place. As Malky continues to harm himself and those around him, he begins to realize that the only way out is forgiveness. *Romans* played in the Alice nella Citta section of the Rome Film Fest after its world premiere in Edinburgh.

Directed by Ludwig and Paul Shammasian, *Romans* delves deep into the mental trauma of child abuse and its aftermath. Geoff Thompson, who wrote the script, was partially inspired by his own experience as a survivor of sexual abuse.

Bloom said in Rome that it was the strength of the script that drew him to the project, as well as playing a role outside of his comfort zone to grow as an actor. “I was always so impressed and remarkably amazed at the courage of our writer for his sincere open truth about his own experience of sexual abuse,” he said.

“I hope that this film will give men who have experienced sexual abuse, a safe place or a feeling of being able to relate,” he said. “I think there’s a real feeling of being alone in that circumstance.”

Bloom said he believed the film is especially timely now, because as pedophilia has long been an issue in the Church, it is just now being tackled openly in Hollywood, as more and more allegations of sexual abuse come out.

“I think that this has been going on for a very long time and it’s obviously an incredibly sensitive subject,” he said. “I think that it’s a shakedown. It’s a time of real revelation and a lot of people are being revealed for who they’ve been and what they are and society is now standing up. It’s time.”

Bloom sees a changing tide across Hollywood with the wave of victims of sexual assault now coming forward. “When we’re talking about the abuse of power from any individual toward another, I think it’s a horrific act,” he said. “It’s something that society is no longer willing to accept.”

“There’s a generation coming through who are standing up and having their voices heard, which I think is long overdue,” he continued.

Bloom, who went to British boarding school, admitted that he had a close friend who suffered abuse, but said that it’s still a difficult subject to talk about.

Speaking as a parent, Bloom highlighted the importance of awareness and communication. “It’s incredibly hard to broach that subject with a kid depending on the age. My son is six,” he said. “We have open communication at all times with his mother and with myself about just his days, what’s his experience. And you have to be attentive and aware and pick up on signs and signals from your child. That’s the responsibility of a parent.”

When asked what he saw as the solution, Bloom drew on his experience as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. “I think that education is important for all of us to understand the level and depth that this kind of abuse can have on children specifically,” he said. “It’s something that we all need to take responsibility for. Children are the most vulnerable.”