# Brigitte Bardot defends controversial behaviour as Gérard Depardieu faces sexual assault verdict



French film icon Brigitte Bardot has stirred controversy by defending actors who engage in inappropriate behaviour, notably in the context of impending sexual assault verdicts involving fellow actor Gérard Depardieu. The comments came just a day before Depardieu was expected to face the verdict of a trial regarding allegations of sexual assault against two women during the filming of "Les Volets Verts" in 2021. Depardieu, 76, has denied the allegations, which form part of a broader narrative involving accusations from approximately 20 women against him, although only this specific trial has proceeded to the courtroom.

In an interview with BFMTV, Bardot, 90, stated, “Feminism is not my thing. People with talent who grab a girl's bottom are thrown into the bottom of the ditch. We could at least let them carry on living. They can't live any more.” This remark illuminates a stark divide within not just the French film industry but also society at large regarding the treatment of sexual misconduct allegations. Bardot's defence of such behaviour resonates with a growing sentiment among certain sectors of the film community that perceive current responses to such allegations as overly punitive, echoing similar sentiments expressed by actress Catherine Deneuve in 2018.

Bardot's comments reflect a broader backlash against what she and others view as an American-inspired culture of puritanism regarding flirtation and sexual interaction. Over the years, Bardot has been outspoken against feminist movements, previously calling accusations against men "hypocritical, ridiculous, and without interest." This perspective, while controversial, aligns with other older French actresses who have similarly resisted the notion that flirtation should be criminalised.

The allegations against Depardieu are serious, detailing specific instances of purported sexual violence, including claims from a set dresser and an assistant director who allege that he made crude remarks and engaged in aggressive behaviour on set. The set dresser contended that he boasted about his prowess with women before allegedly groping her. These accounts point to troubling patterns of conduct that are now scrutinised within the industry.

In addition to the current trial, Depardieu faces other legal troubles, including a 2024 request by French prosecutors to charge him with rape following further investigations into incidents dating back to 2018. Legal representatives for Depardieu have denied these allegations, asserting that interactions were consensual. This ongoing situation has drawn attention not only to Depardieu's actions but also to the systemic issues of power and abuse within the French film industry.

Adding further complexity, French President Emmanuel Macron's earlier remarks defending Depardieu as a "great actor" and lamenting what he described as a "manhunt" for the actor have sparked criticism. Many question the appropriateness of such support given the serious nature of the allegations and the broader context of sexual assault in the industry.

The judicial response also reflects a shift in public consciousness regarding sexual violence, culminating in findings by a recent parliamentary inquiry which labelled sexual violence as "systematic, endemic, and persistent" in the arts. This inquiry has repercussions extending beyond individual cases, bringing to light the broader culture that enables such behaviours to persist.

As the French film community grapples with these allegations and the ramifications that follow, Bardot's comments underscore the tensions between traditional views on masculinity and sexuality and the evolving understanding of consent and harassment in contemporary society. Whether these discussions will lead to meaningful change or further division remains to be seen as the trial continues and more women come forward with their own experiences.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
2. Paragraphs 1, 8
3. Paragraphs 7, 9
4. Paragraphs 7, 9
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 8
7. Paragraphs 7, 9

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2. <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2024/04/30/gerard-depardieu-to-go-on-trial-over-sexual-assault-allegations/> - French actor Gérard Depardieu is set to face a criminal trial in October 2024 over alleged sexual assaults of two women on the set of the 2021 film 'Les Volets Verts' ('The Green Shutters'). Depardieu, 75, has previously denied any wrongdoing. The Paris public prosecutor's office announced that he has been 'summoned to appear before the criminal court.' ([irishtimes.com](https://www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2024/04/30/gerard-depardieu-to-go-on-trial-over-sexual-assault-allegations/?utm_source=openai))
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