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Hollywood's Suppression of Palestine Solidarity

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The American entertainment industry, once a bastion of free expression, has come under scrutiny for its apparent efforts to stifle voices supporting Palestine. Artists, actors, and production staff have reported instances of backlash for criticizing Israel's actions in Gaza, where more than 57,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 2023, according to Gaza's Health Ministry and UN estimates.

Industry insiders, ranging from actors and dancers to set designers and screenwriters, have shared with credible sources that they face severe repercussions for expressing solidarity

with Palestinians. These workers, often without the shield of A-list status, describe a climate of fear where speaking out risks blacklisting, harassment, or even termination. Their accounts paint a picture of an industry that, far from championing creativity, is complicit in enforcing silence on a conflict many describe as a humanitarian catastrophe.

Actress Rachel Zegler faced significant criticism after posting “free Palestine” on social media in 2024, prompting public debate, but there is no documented public confirmation of punishment by studio executives. (She later reaffirmed her stance, saying “nothing is worth innocent lives.”) Producers reportedly blamed her for the underwhelming performance of her film *Snow White* at the box office, a move insiders say was a thinly veiled attempt to punish her for her stance.

These incidents reflect a broader trend. Across film, television, and theatre, a handful of powerful corporations Disney, Amazon, Netflix, and others, wield immense control. On Broadway, three major companies dominate 31 of the 41 theatres, while influential venues like Lincoln Center are overseen by boards with ties to pro-Israel donors. This concentration of power enables a small elite to dictate what is said, or unsaid, about contentious issues like Palestine.

An open letter issued in October 2023 was signed by over 700 entertainment figures, including executives from major studios, urging condemnation of Hamas and expressing support for Israel’s right to defend itself. The message was unambiguous: dissent would not be tolerated. Actor Melissa Barrera learned this firsthand when she was dropped from a *Scream* film after criticising Israel’s Gaza campaign on social media. “You can win an Oscar and never work again,” said an anonymous actor and organiser with SAG-AFTRA Members for Ceasefire in a recent interview. “Your career can vanish overnight.”

The fear of retaliation is palpable. Workers report aggressive surveillance by executives, with social media posts scrutinised and pro-Palestine sentiments met with swift punishment. Many choose anonymity when discussing their advocacy, citing threats from management, colleagues, and even union leaders. This repression, insiders argue, betrays the industry’s supposed commitment to free speech and exposes its capacity to enforce conformity as effectively as it produces blockbusters.

As global voices, including several nations and human rights groups, label Israel’s actions in Gaza as genocidal, the silence from America’s entertainment industry grows louder. The

ease with which this sector has pivoted from celebrating creativity to policing dissent raises questions about its values and whose interests it truly serves.

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