

# #MeToo campaign shows its ultra-right colors: Hachette Book Group suppresses Woody Allen's memoir

By David Walsh  
9 March 2020

In a scandalous act of corporate censorship, Hachette Book Group (HBG) announced Friday it would not publish Woody Allen's memoir at the behest of journalist Ronan Farrow, Allen's son, and in the face of protests by its own employees. The #MeToo campaign reveals its extreme right-wing character in this bullying and reactionary development.

Who will these middle class fanatics seek to silence next? Allen has been a significant cultural figure in the US for more than a half-century. Now, Farrow, an unprincipled scoundrel and former adviser to warmonger Hillary Clinton, has been given veto power over who may and may not have a book published in the US. Hachette officials' capitulation is disgusting, but entirely predictable.

Ironically, Allen appeared in the Walter Bernstein-Martin Ritt production, *The Front* (1976), playing a smalltime bookie during the anti-Communist purges of the 1950s who agrees to pose as the author of television scripts actually produced by a blacklisted writer. Now, Allen himself faces blacklisting, on trumped up grounds, and perhaps with no possibility of "rehabilitation." To have a film released or a book published, he may need a "front" of his own.

The current furor erupted when Hachette reported last Monday it would publish Allen's autobiography *Apropos of Nothing* in April under its Grand Central imprint. That announcement was greeted with fierce protests by Farrow and his sister Dylan Farrow, who has charged that Allen molested her as a child, claims the latter has steadfastly denied and which were rejected in two investigations. The pair have been egged on in their efforts by their mother, actress Mia Farrow, Allen's disoriented and "scorned" ex-lover.

Ronan Farrow's recent book, *Catch and Kill*, bragging about the campaign to "take down" film producer Harvey Weinstein, among others, was published by Hachette under the Little, Brown imprint. Farrow had the audacity to denounce the publisher's plans to put out Allen's book on the grounds that "Hachette did not fact check the Woody Allen book. It's wildly unprofessional in multiple obvious directions for Hachette to behave this way."

By calling for the "fact-checking" of a personal memoir, Farrow was insisting that the book be submitted to he and his sister for approval—or, of course, disapproval.

Furthermore, Farrow threatened to cut off ties with any division

of Hachette, which had allegedly shown "a lack of ethics and compassion for victims of sexual abuse."

Briefly, in mid-week, Hachette resisted Farrow's astounding demand and effort at blackmail. However, on Thursday some 75 Hachette employees walked out in support of censorship. They claimed to be "standing in solidarity" with Ronan and Dylan Farrow "and survivors of sexual assault."

On Friday, HBG announced its surrender. In a cynical, hypocritical statement, Hachette insisted the "decision to cancel Mr. Allen's book was a difficult one. At HBG we take our relationships with authors very seriously, and do not cancel books lightly. We have published and will continue to publish many challenging books. As publishers, we make sure every day in our work that different voices and conflicting points of views can be heard." Yes, Hachette will publish all manner of difficult and controversial books until an actual difficult controversy erupts.

The publisher went on, "Over the past few days, HBG leadership had extensive conversations with our staff and others. After listening, we came to the conclusion that moving forward with publication would not be feasible for HBG." In other words, the book giant, with half a billion dollars in annual revenue, decided it was not in its best financial interests to challenge the upper middle class layer obsessed with gender, sex and race. This has dangerous implications. This rotten crowd is now attempting to determine what the American public will see and read.

Allen's most recent film, *A Rainy Day in New York*, was suppressed by Amazon Studios, which produced it, and has effectively been blocked from distribution in the US.

Certain voices were raised in opposition to the suppression of Allen's book. Best-selling author Stephen King criticized Hachette's decision on Twitter: "The Hachette decision to drop the Woody Allen book makes me very uneasy. It's not him; I don't give a damn about Mr. Allen. It's who gets muzzled next that worries me." King's tweet was commented on by dozens of defenders of Hachette's decision, asserting that Allen was a well-known child molester, sexual predator, pedophile and/or rapist. The comments are largely deranged. An entire social layer appears to have lost its senses.

PEN America issued a relatively weak statement, which suggested that if the end result "is that this book, regardless of its merits, disappears without a trace, readers will be denied the

opportunity to read it and render their own judgements. As a defender of free speech and the availability of a wide breadth of books and ideas, we also fervently hope that the outcome does not lead publishers to shy away from manuscripts that editors think are worthwhile but that are about, or even by, people who may be considered contemptible.”

In the *Guardian*, Jo Glanville, former director of English PEN and ex-editor of Index on Censorship, pointed out that Allen “was investigated on two occasions and has never been charged. While Dylan and Ronan accuse Woody Allen, he has not been found guilty. Nothing has been proven. There is in fact no acceptable reason for not publishing Woody Allen’s book. The staff at Hachette who walked out were not behaving like publishers, they were acting as censors.”

In any case, there is no good reason for Ronan Farrow to have the slightest credibility on any issue. His history is that of a professional propagandist and liar for the US government in its bloody operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East. As a teenager, Farrow was the protégé of—and eventually speechwriter for—the late diplomat Richard Holbrooke (involved in one imperialist crime after another, from the Vietnam War to the Balkans and Afghanistan). Farrow later went to work for the Obama administration in 2009 in the “Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.”

He then served as Clinton’s “special adviser for global youth issues.” In that capacity, Farrow traveled to countries like Tunisia in the wake of the 2011 uprisings to preach the virtues of American “democracy.” In his book *War on Peace*, Farrow explains, for example, that he “put together a small team of Foreign Service officers to focus on the global implications of the youth unrest,” i.e., a US government unit devoted to defending the bourgeois rulers in the region against their own populations. This is the great moral light of the #MeToo witch-hunt!

The allegations against Woody Allen in regard to Dylan Farrow, pertaining to events that occurred in August 1992, do not have the slightest credibility. They were not pursued by the New York Department of Social Services because it found no credible evidence to support them. Earlier, a team from the Yale-New Haven Hospital Child Sexual Abuse Clinic concluded about the child’s claims: “We had two hypotheses: one, that these were statements that were made by an emotionally disturbed child and then became fixed in her mind. And the other hypothesis was that she was coached or influenced by her mother [Farrow]. We did not come to a firm conclusion. We think that it was probably a combination.”

Moses Farrow, the brother of Dylan and Ronan Farrow, in his May 2018 essay, “A Son Speaks Out,” argued that “the fatal dysfunction within my childhood home had nothing to do with Woody. It began long before he entered the picture and came straight from a deep and persistent darkness within the Farrow family.”

Moses asserts that it was “common knowledge in Hollywood that my grandfather, the director John Farrow, was a notorious drinker and serial philanderer. There were numerous alcohol-fueled arguments between her parents, and Mia told me that she was the victim of attempted molestation within her own

family. Her brother, my uncle John, who visited us many times when we were young, is currently in prison on a conviction of multiple child molestation charges. (My mother has never publicly commented on this or expressed concern about *his* victims.) My uncle Patrick and his family would often come by, but those visits could end abruptly as Mia and Patrick would often wind up arguing. Patrick would commit suicide in 2009.”

According to Moses Farrow, his mother regularly beat him and his siblings. “It pains me to recall instances in which I witnessed siblings, some blind or physically disabled, dragged down a flight of stairs to be thrown into a bedroom or a closet, then having the door locked from the outside. She even shut my brother Thaddeus, paraplegic from polio, in an outdoor shed overnight as punishment for a minor transgression.”

Soon-Yi, who would eventually marry Allen, was Mia Farrow’s “most frequent scapegoat,” writes Moses. “My sister had an independent streak and, of all of us, was the least intimidated by Mia. When pushed, she would call our mother out on her behavior and ugly arguments would ensue. When Soon-Yi was young, Mia once threw a large porcelain centerpiece at her head. Luckily it missed, but the shattered pieces hit her legs. Years later, Mia beat her with a telephone receiver.” Needless to say, Moses Farrow’s harrowing account has not received one-hundredth the publicity that Dylan Farrow’s charges have.

Three of Mia Farrow’s adoptive children, Tam, Lark and Thaddeus, died tragically. Moses Farrow insists that Tam died of a drug overdose in 2000 (at the age of 21) after a lengthy battle with depression and that Lark died due to an AIDS-related illness in 2008 at 35, following a struggle with addiction. Thaddeus, 27, shot himself in his car in 2016.

The corporate censorship of Woody Allen’s memoir, in combination with the effort to block the showing of Roman Polanski’s *J’accuse (An Officer and a Spy)*, about the Dreyfus Affair, mark a new and more sinister stage in the evolution of the #MeToo campaign. Anyone who has had illusions about its character would be well advised to open his or her eyes to the truth.

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