

Written by Administrator
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After he won the Oscar for best actor for 1999's *American Beauty*, moviegoers might logically have expected to see Kevin Spacey – everywhere. To fans' chagrin, though, that didn't happen: He starred in 2003's *The Life of David Gale* and 2004's *Beyond the Sea*, but then pretty much disappeared with the exception of 2008's *Recount* for HBO and occasional supporting roles.

Not that he wasn't busy. Spacey joined the board at the Old Vic Theatre in London in 2000, and in 2004 he signed on as its artistic director for a 10-year term. He's planning to leave in 2015, so he'll actually have served for 11 years. Now that the theater is, as he calls it, "a well-oiled machine," he feels comfortable returning to film on a larger scale.

In mid-December, on the eve of the release of *Casino Jack*, for which Spacey has been nominated for a Golden Globe, we spoke by phone with the 51-year-old actor.

Why'd you leave us for so long?

I made a very conscious and deliberate choice. I had been focused on a film career over a 10- or 12-year period. I literally asked myself, "Now what?" ... I didn't think I wanted to spend the next 10 years doing the exact same thing. And I'd rather have people missing me in movies than thinking they're sick of me.

So how did the Old Vic gig come about?

I was asked to serve on a committee to help find an artistic director to get a company up and running again, and it suddenly struck me that here I was on this committee, when in fact running a theater was a dream I'd always had. When we started, it was me and my producer in a dressing room with a phone.

Now we're in our seventh season, 38th production, and we have one of the largest [theatrical]

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educational programs in London. [Spacey begins rehearsals May 3 at the Old Vic as the lead in *Richard III*

, which will play in London and then go on international tour, including a stint at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in early 2012.]

Let's talk *Casino Jack*. How'd you come into that role?

I had known about [Washington lobbyist Jack] Abramoff and the scandal, and I knew about the project, but I had no idea [director] George Hickenlooper wanted me to do it. He put a note on his Facebook page that I'd be perfect, and Dana Brunetti [Spacey's business partner] saw it. There was some Facebook poking, and George and I got together and realized we share this fascination for American politics, how money and power and influence invade our political system, and our frustration with that.

That opening monologue is amazing.

Originally it was about an hour and 30 minutes into the film, and it just didn't fit. I said, I know this'll sound radical, but let's start the movie with it, with meeting the event, which is *him*. ... That's what I love about movies – you can take a piece of film and put it where it was never intended to be, and you find out that's where it belongs.

Did you meet Abramoff, and did you like him?

I met him at Cumberland [Federal Correctional Institution] in Maryland before shooting. I found him to be very intelligent, very passionate, devoted to Republican ideals, deeply religious, funny, charming. I could see why he was such a successful lobbyist.

What's next for you, filmwise?

Horrible Bosses, a black comedy [with Jennifer Aniston, Jason Bateman and Jason Sudeikis].

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It'll be out later this year.

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