

JIMMY BENNET – ATTORNEY SATTRO – MASSIMO GILETTI: INTERVIEW

MASSIMO GILETTI: (the host): [...] We know little about JIMMY BENNETT:, so I would like you to tell us more: who's JIMMY BENNETT:?. Because, and I say this to you all, he's been one of the most popular young actors in the USA ... is it so?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah...I had... started when I was very young and I was blessed to work with some of the biggest actors. So I've been in different films in all my life like comedy, series, and dramas, anything. And I consistently worked and worked until my adult life. So kind of my history started when I was very young and I fell in love with it and never wanted to stop.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You worked with people like Harrison Ford, Bruce Willis, and Eddie Murphy... very important names of the cinema worldwide ... and for a child this is something uncommon, in Italy we call it "child prodigy", and it means talented children, able to act easily in front of the camera. Was your life like that? Instead of going to school you went to the cinema, working in the movies or you had a normal life?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, schooling wasn't really a big concern in my life and they homeschooled me. Each film that I went on I had a... a studio – teacher, that's what they're called. I used to have somebody at home who was with me also in the USA, that's how my education was, so I kind of missing the whole growing up with... you know, with friends from school. I never had school party or just anything like that ...was not a part of my life. Instead I got to travel and worked with people that are very famous and talented. So my childhood was definitely an exciting one.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Do you have any memories of...I don't know, maybe Harrison Ford or some other famous actor?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I have some...one in particular that I still vividly recall from "Firewall" and working with Harrison Ford, he was always trying to teach me this work. I had great mentors but he had very nice experiences as a stunt when he was young, and he told me he could manage to jump down the stairs without hurting himself, so one day in the middle of a scene he stopped, looked at me and said: "Watch this!" ...and I think I was there with my mom, kind of looking around... and he just tumbled down falling from the stairs, from side to side, hitting everything.

Everybody stopped what they were doing, staring at him and saying “Are you okay? Are you ok?” and he gets to me laughing ...probably this is the funniest story that I’ve seen.

MASSIMO GILETTI: ...Well, that kind of world for a 5, 6 or 7 years old boy... was it perceived as a game? How could have been this LA Hollywood world and all its stars to a child?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I definitely had a very innocent mindset towards that and I did think it was one of the most fun things that I could do. Everything was fun, the first film, with Eddie Murphy, I was surrounded by 8 years old children and there was fun stuff that we were doing. I remember my past as if it was a kind of normal teenage hood.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Couldn’t it be dangerous for a child growing up like that? I mean, in a different way than other children do...

JIMMY BENNETT: I think it’s all about people around you; I haven’t been forced to act. I know personally actors that have been forced by their parents and then they didn’t know what to do as grown up...

MASSIMO GILETTI: But in your case, your mother brought you to act...how did it all start?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I think my mom saw that I had a different personality and I was never gifted for sports, at school, she saw something particular in me. So, she got me into acting with commercial and I started working very consistently, so after that, after every film or after every casting my mom kept on asking me: “This is what you really want to do in your life?” And I’ve always said yes, because I knew that, in one way or another, I would have lived with creativity. So this has been my teenage hood, I couldn’t have done anything else.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Attorney, can I ask him how much he earned at that time? They talked about significant earnings for his first movies, commercials. I read on some American newspapers something about more than 1 or 2 million dollars...

ATTORNEY SATTRO: Yes, yes ... he earned a lot, millions of dollars. This for 2 or 3 years, he earned more than 1, 5 million dollars.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Who managed these earnings? Considering he was only 5 or 6 years old, I imagined his parents did...isn't it right?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yes!

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, so your parents. This is the story that takes us to talk about Asia Argento. They met for the first time when he was 7; because Asia at that time directed a movie ... whose trailer will be shown in a few seconds. It is a very harsh movie, "The heart is deceitful above all things". Why am I saying it's harsh? Because it talks about the difficult relationship between a mom, who is distressed, drug addicted, violent, in some ways even unreliable, and a son. The mom is played by Asia Argento, the son by him (pointing at JIMMY BENNETT) who was only 7 years old at that time. Let's watch the trailer now!

(...)

A very harsh film, there are violent scenes, the relationship mother – son is very particular. You were 7 years old; did they tell you about the script? How do they usually work with a child going through such a difficult situation?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I think part of ... I worked a lot as a kid, they give you some sort of contact but it's not actually what happens. At 7 years old I probably couldn't understand. So, they kind of give you scenarios that, you know, by kind of make you feeling the same way if that's happening. So, I was able to kind of just adapt to the role and, yeah so they not tell you the nitty and gritty, then I watched it when I grew up.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Is it true that there's a scene where you were sexually harassed?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, yeah...that scene was with me and Jeremy Reynolds. During the scene he wasn't in the same room with me at all, it was something like a hallucination. I was in a hospital bed, I didn't know what's going on...they just told me that I had a surgery on, as I was kind of reacting, but I was never told what actually happened. But then I found out the real content of the scene, when I grew up.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Have you ever gone into shock for shooting a scene like that?

JIMMY BENNETT: I've filmed a lot of scenes in my life, and I've always separated them from my real life. This is what being an actor means, you know; you have to

put yourself into the character, but at the same time you have to separate from it. Some scenes could be really harsh, but a talented actor is able to cope with that.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Asia Argento in that movie, plays the role of a mother, of your mother, and you were the son, and I think that maybe Asia herself chose you for playing that part...am I wrong? What do you remember? She chose you?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I don't remember much from the whole process...I do remember...I think maybe she saw me before, in some commercials and she invited me and my mother in her house in Venice, California. She had a daughter, a little younger than me and Asia and my mom were talking about the movie, that's how I entered the cast. But I don't remember the whole process...

MASSIMO GILETTI: I read some statements by Asia Argento, and she tells that in you she saw a boy, a son ... I mean, she really felt like a "second mother" to you...is it so? Is it true that this was the way they felt you on set?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, that's what I felt. We had a close relationship and... she was just a couple of years older than my mom.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, during the scenes, during the day, Asia had a connection with you? Asia was 27 and you were only 7. During that movie, was there a particular connection or she didn't have time to spend with you?

JIMMY BENNETT: No, it was special. She was really focused on the movie and she really wanted to recreate the relationship mother – son, so that it seemed real. But it seemed like it went beyond the professional aspect, if you look at any photos you can realize that our relationship was very close. She offers me an ice-cream, she takes me around...

MASSIMO GILETTI: Well, I asked you about that because I read on the New York Times, some time ago, a statement reported by Attorney Sattro where he claims that Asia Argento was a mother to Jimmy, Jimmy was a son to Asia. I mean, there was a strong relationship between the two, referring to the mother – son one. Do you confirm this? It's written on the NYT...

L.S.: Yeah, that's exactly what we expressed in our note of intent, I mean in our prior communication. We examined the situation between Jimmy and Asia, she also directed him, guided him and she maintained this relationship like mentor – disciple.

This relationship went on also on the social network, like Tweeter. Yes, it was a kind of relationship mother – son.

MASSIMO GILETTI: This relationship... so, they were making a movie. He was 7. At the end of the film, I'd like to understand if this relationship somehow went on. I mean, normally actors and directors are keeping their relationship, by sending emails one another, they call each other. At the end of the film, your relationship went on... I mean maybe through your mother, considering that at 7 years old there cannot be a relationship between a 7 year old boy and a woman of 27...I mean, she talked to your mother...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, it continued in the form that we were saying, through emails, Tweeter and as you said text messages. And things like that. After that I kept filming and traveling and I think she was doing the same as well. There wasn't any face to face, for the next ten years, so we were just sending emails and maybe she was emailing my mom a lot and checking in and things of that nature.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You say that once the movie was over you kept on living your life, working in the cinema, but have no other kind of relationship beyond emails, text messages, but you never saw face to face again. Is it correct?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, that's correct.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, this is it. After some years, we get to 2013. In 2013 he was 17something, while Asia Argento was 37. According to both Jimmy's and Asia statements, they met in that year. They both claimed the meeting took place. So I'm wondering, after all these years, who proposed the meeting?

JIMMY BENNETT: That was Asia, who proposed the meeting.

MASSIMO GILETTI: How did she propose it? She called, she wrote an email...

JIMMY BENNETT: I think we had started talking about it via tweeter, than following that we passed to emails and that's how we set up the meeting.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Were you surprised about that? Did you expect this to happen? Asia lived for a long time, also at that time, in the States...but after a long time, were you surprised she asked to meet you? ...10 years had passed...

JIMMY BENNETT: I hadn't been too surprised; I knew sooner or later we'd have met again. So, when she had invited me, I was more than happy to come and talk to her.

She wanted to talk to me about an Italian movie she was making and she wanted me to be part of it.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Let's go in order, because everything we say now might have some legal implications. We need to be careful. I want to show you something, a photo we put on our led wall. Asia was so happy to see someone who she claims to be like a son to her, that she posted on her Instagram an important statement that we reported here on the wall. She says: "Waiting for my lost son, who I haven't seen for a long time. (So she confirms what Jimmy was saying before) My love JIMMY BENNETT: I'm filled with trepidation, smoking cigarettes like there's no tomorrow." People, who know Asia, know that she is like that, when she's anxious, when she's excited, she starts smoking a lot. Did you feel the same, the same anxiety, and the same joy?

JIMMY BENNETT: No, I remember her feeling a little stranger and she was sending photos, or she kept on showing me some cards she had written in her hotel room. To me there's always been a sort of cultural barrier, I didn't know if her attitude was a way of showing her attention, so I didn't know exactly what to expect.

MASSIMO GILETTI: My question is, Asia maybe was happy to see again that son she hadn't seen for 10 years...what about you? You haven't seen her for 10 years as well; did you feel the same joy? As you can see (pointing at the led wall) she was waiting for you like a mother with a son...did you feel the same joy in meeting her?

JIMMY BENNETT: I mean, I was excited to meet her...but I wasn't smoking cigarettes nervously, like there's no tomorrow. To me it was like an ordinary day, meeting a friend: Asia.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Asia calls you "my son", how did you call Asia, my mom?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, as you can see, this was the kind of atmosphere before what we're about to find out, I mean before what happened in this place. Where did the appointment take place?

JIMMY BENNETT: We met at "Ritz Carlton", in Marina del Rey California.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So a few kilometers away from LA...but, sorry, why in a hotel?

JIMMY BENNETT: I've had tons of meetings at restaurants and hotel, with people coming to town. Usually actors they don't go around the city, so they have meetings in hotel or simply go in a restaurant.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Is it true that you had been driven there by somebody else? I mean, that you got to the hotel with another person...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, yeah...I can't drive, so I always have somebody driving me around, whether he could be a friend or somebody else.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Can you tell us the name of this person?

JIMMY BENNETT: No, I'm sorry.

ATTORNEY SATTRO Yeah, we're not gonna be...the story has already changed a lot of people's lives, so far. So we don't think it is kind to involve other people, and then there are still investigations going on. So we don't want to involve third party, so we don't need to share who that person was.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Can I ask you if this person, for example, left you there at the hotel or came up into the room with you? Or if he or she stayed out of the hotel.

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, he came up with me into the room. And, as you can see, Asia was excited and looked at me in the eyes. Then she looked to the person who was with me and said "who are you?", before even making eye contact with me. She was surprised to see that there was another person with me. And she was just making him feel like he was intruding during the meeting. He made the decision himself to go downstairs and hang out, while we had remained.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So Asia didn't say "go out" to the person who was there with you, it was more a feeling you got...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, it was a feeling he got...

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok then! I'd like to show you now...this is the Ritz, where this meeting would have happened...where this meeting happened. Even if Asia and Jimmy disagree in the content of the meeting, was this the place where the meeting happened, Jimmy? Was this the hotel?

JIMMY BENNETT: I can't remember exactly...but it seems so.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Well, this is it. There are some photos that have been posted on Instagram by Asia Argento, they were taken on the day of the meeting. On the day they were in the hotel. Let's take a look at these pictures. I'd like to show them to Jimmy. Do you remember them?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I remember them well.

MASSIMO GILETTI: They had been taken in the hotel room?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yes.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Were you dressed like that?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, these pictures were published by Asia...it seems like everything is normal so far. As far as you remember, they were taken before or after the sex act? Attorney...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, there's just one photo that has been taken standing by the window. That was taken before the sex act.

MASSIMO GILETTI: This one?

JIMMY BENNETT: This photo was taken afterwards.

MASSIMO GILETTI: This one afterwards. Are you still inside the hotel room? Ok, so this was the situation. But now we need to enter, very carefully, in the facts that had happened on that day. Jimmy claims that Asia made the person who was with Jimmy understand he had to leave the room. So they remained alone. From that moment on there are two different stories. We just need to listen to these two stories, without judging. But we need to understand what would have happened, from Jimmy. When you remained alone, what happened?

JIMMY BENNETT: Well, it all happened very fast. We weren't in the room for too long. I think the first thing that happened was that she offered me champagne, she already been drinking. Then she put on some music on the record player and she was smoking cigarettes out of the window. She was catching up and telling me about the film that she had in mind. She told me the reason for the film was to show me the world, because she knew I had never been to Europe before. She wanted to take me to Rome. So she would have liked me to take part in this film.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You were talking, chatting...but you already know that you have reported what was a normal chat between a director and a boy who have worked for her as an actor. You are here because you made an allegation to Asia Argento of sexual harassment, of raping you in that hotel room. I would like to understand what happened.

JIMMY BENNETT: It had started when I first got in the room. There was a lot of kissing and a lot of her ...grabbing my face, looking at me kind of inspecting me, saying "oh my son, I've missed you so much" and kissing me. My interpretation of that was that it was maybe just a way of showing her affection, and that it was a matter of culture. Some peoples they kiss on their cheeks or their lips. So her kissing me was longer and longer, then I got the feeling it wasn't just a friendly thing, but that she was trying to explore.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Words they count, Attorney. What do you mean by "explore"?

JIMMY BENNETT: It's something that I thought ...like she had the intention of getting somewhere else. Not just a kiss.

MASSIMO GILETTI: That "something different", according to what you said, will happen later...

JIMMY BENNETT: That's correct, yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Can I ask you, without going into details, what would have happened in your opinion?

JIMMY BENNETT: It's hard for me to talk about this in front of strangers and people that I don't know, but I do wanna give the benefit of the doubt in telling the truth and also I don't wanna say anything inappropriate. After, the kissing started getting longer; she put her hands on my body in different ways and following that was when she pushed me onto the bed and took my pants off.

MASSIMO GILETTI: I see you are looking at your attorney while you talk, are you afraid of saying something that can be wrong?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yes. Asia already threatened me a couple of days ago. I'm not too worried about the threats; I'm just more worried about the misinterpretation. I just don't wanna say anything that can harm anyone.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Sure! But since you and your Attorney said all this after a long time, and you are in Italy also to clarify, to tell what really happened and that Asia Argento, Attorney, says it didn't go like that: it's Jimmy who assaulted me ...or better, she used words like "frightened, terrified". I suffered from the sexual impulse of Jimmy. Can we clarify this aspect? I think is the most important...

ATTORNEY SATTRO: Yeah, yeah. First of all, Asia has told three versions so far. She came out saying that she did not had sex, and then on the website TMZ she said there was the intercourse but then she didn't feel well. And then Mark Haller claimed that my client had been the assaulter. So, actually, there are three versions so far. While my client described only one. Anyway, it has been established there was a sexual intercourse. In my preliminary notification, this has been recorded in the minutes.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, you say "it's no me that I had a sexual intercourse with Asia Argento" but it was she. So you're claiming your own version "Asia Argento harassed me".

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, that's correct.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Was it a complete intercourse?

JIMMY BENNETT: How do you mean complete?

MASSIMO GILETTI: A complete sexual intercourse?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Was it the first time for you or you already had other sexual intercourses?

JIMMY BENNETT: No, I had previous experience.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Well, I'm going to ask you a question now...then, Attorney, if I'm wrong please interrupt me. What we still hardly understand, and I'm saying this with all due respect, is this: if a man says "I've harassed a woman" unfortunately no one of us can say "women cannot defend themselves", but if a woman harasses a man or a boy ...it is technically difficult to understand that it can happen. Did you get what I said? I mean, a man must be an active part even if he's being harassed...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, so I think the main evidence come from at least what I received. They say that I wanted this intercourse to happen with Asia, what's wrong with that? Either you must be homosexual not to have an intercourse with Asia. But is not like that. A woman can be attractive in some ways, but can also abuse a man. I just don't think people come out and said anything like that. This is a common opinion now, so people don't believe to what have happened.

MASSIMO GILETTI: With all due respect, it's difficult for me as well understanding how this could happen...because it is technically complex as well; maybe it should take a sexologist...that we do not have now. But you are aware that normally is difficult to believe that a woman could harass a man. It is complicated to believe. We could think of some trying, but not of a complete sexual intercourse without a man taking part into it.

ATTORNEY SATTRO So, I guess one of the good answers to that would be ...if the teacher would have raped someone's son, this would mean that she didn't committed the rape? Is there an age to abuse or it's just the fact that if there's a man taking part in it this could be seen as a real problem?

MASSIMO GILETTI: Attorney, I can understand that in California...we need to remind that you have to be 18 years old in California to have a sexual intercourse. So, yes I agree that this is illegal...but what I'm saying is that it is difficult to understand how a boy could only be subjected to a situation like this, without being part of it. This is my personal point of view. We've all been teenagers; we've all had affairs with older women, so I find it difficult to consider it a rape. Do you understand?

JIMMY BENNETT: I also wanna add that I had a longer history with Asia. I had a lot of trust in her. So for a situation like that I probably trusted her even more. And the power that she had over the situation, made me feel powerless in a way.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You're telling me that while you were talking about the movie there was a sort of situation in which Asia was promising you to be part of the movie and you would say yes to be part of it...or I misunderstood?

JIMMY BENNETT: That's how I feel, yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: After the intercourse...how long was that?

JIMMY BENNETT: I don't wanna say that, that's just too private.

MASSIMO GILETTI: What happened after? I want to show you this picture, where you see two people who look relaxed and quiet. Can we show it? Ok, here it is. This is a picture ...Asia and you were in the bed, when was it taken... that day?

JIMMY BENNETT: She had asked me to take it, and to take others...immediately after our meeting.

MASSIMO GILETTI: But was it taken by you? Is it a selfie?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You took it with your phone?

JIMMY BENNETT: I'm sorry, say that again?

MASSIMO GILETTI: With your personal telephone?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, my phone.

MASSIMO GILETTI: And it was taken after the intercourse?

JIMMY BENNETT: That's correct, yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Sorry if I insist on that, but you don't look upset...I mean this is what I can't really understand. Attorney Sattro says "ok, it's illegal" and we all agree on that. But what I really don't understand is this...it doesn't look like ...you understand what I'm saying'

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I understand.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Did you hear the audience too? They clapped along as well...it means that we all have the same thinking, with all due respect. (At the Attorney) Can you answer after the commercial? Sorry, just 5 seconds.

(...)

MASSIMO GILETTI: Here we are again! We're back; we were talking about the picture behind me where you can see JIMMY BENNETT: in his very young age...how old were you exactly? 17something? ... And you see Asia Argento in the picture too. So, I was asking ...and Attorney Sattro will talk now, I was wondering about that gaze on the picture, it doesn't seem to be scared...it doesn't seem the one of a person who had been harassed. But this, of course, it's just my personal opinion.

ATTORNEY SATTRO: I begin by asking to all the people in the audience to rise up their hands: how does a man look like after being harassed? Then I've heard applause after what has been said...what if there were Andrew and Jenny on that picture, instead of Asia and Jimmy, the applause would have been the same? I don't think so. So, interpreting what was going through in his mind just basing on this photo, it's silly.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, this is your opinion. There's something, attorney that Jimmy said...two days ago, so before coming to Italy, Asia threatened me. Is it true?

ATTORNEY SATTRO: Ok, so there's Mark Haller, the third attorney, who sent us a letter saying he would have watched this interview and would have searched for any reason to contest. She also sent a 24 hours' notice to Rose McGowan to withdraw what he claimed against her. So she keeps on being consistent with that.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Just to make the audience understand...Rose McGowan is a friend of Asia Argento. Probably next week we'll show some photos of her and Dove, her fiancé. They've been at the center of this issue, because it seems that all the photos and selfies had been given by Asia's friend or ex friend Dove at this time, to the public. But I would like to stick to the point. So, the threats. There have been threats. But there's one more thing we want to show you, the note that had been written by Jimmy. Look at the top of the note, it's small...the text is written on the hotel notepad where the meeting took place: "Asia, I love you with all my heart. I'm so happy we met again and so happy to have you in my life. Jimmy". Can you explain this?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I can respond to this. What I was saying earlier was that she had sent me notes before our meeting. She asked if I could write a letter too, to remember our meeting.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, but this note written on the hotel's notepad...Attorney, I'm asking this to you, who are looking at me like if you're saying "let's make the right questions", I'm a journalist and you're an attorney, so I must make some questions, delicate too. It seems to me that this note had been written on that day, or maybe he took the hotel notepad home with him and after some time he wrote it. When was it written?

JIMMY BENNETT: That was written, like I just said, when I got into the hotel room.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So before the sexual intercourse?

JIMMY BENNETT: That's correct, yeah.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok...I'm surprised of that "I'm so happy to have you in my life", but anyway...Attorney, these are your answers. As you can see it's a complicated story, we need to be very careful. Asia Argento, and I have to say this because she's not physically here with us, we hope you can tell yours too, Asia. We invite you here as well, if you want to; even if, so far, she has never spoken. But the point is, if you are being harassed, Jimmy, when it ended you were worn out, you felt strange...how did you feel inside? Was there confusion?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I'd been confused immediately afterwards and following for the next couple of years. This is what happened.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So this is the point, I mean you say that from that moment on my life has changed. I mean, the violence you say you've been through changed your life? Is it correct, Attorney?

ATTORNEY SATTRO That's correct, that's exactly what we're saying in our prior notification.

MASSIMO GILETTI: (At jimmy) Why you didn't make any allegation for the abuse?

JIMMY BENNETT: Because what I went through...I didn't know what happened to me. Such a difficult and deep experience, I felt confused. It took me some time and some people's action to go public, as Asia did, so that I could find similarities between "me too" movement and my story.

MASSIMO GILETTI: What I'll ask you later is, by the way, why you decided after so long to talk about this? But before that, I'd like to understand two things: after what happened, Asia Argento says you went out eating... out in a restaurant, do you confirm this?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah...is this what Asia said?

MASSIMO GILETTI: It seems to me like that, because I didn't spoke personally to her, that it was written on the newspaper...that you went out eating afterwards and there wasn't just you but also another person. So I'm asking you if it's like that...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, that's correct. We went out to eat and talked about the film that Asia wanted me to take part in.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok. So, for the first time we've heard Jimmy's statement on this issue. They went out eating after that and, at this point I'm asking ... Asia remained in touch with you or disappeared from your life? You said she promised you to take part in a movie...

JIMMY BENNETT: No, she disappeared for... for many years.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You never looked for her? Have you ever looked for her in those years? Or you didn't want to because you went through all you say you went through, you didn't want to look for her?

JIMMY BENNETT: I'm sorry, can you repeat the question?

MASSIMO GILETTI: You never looked for her again? Did you try to look for her through email or Instagram or text messages? Did you ever try?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah...in a few years I think we have contacted each other a couple of times.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Only? There was no other contact. This is another important detail. But I need to show you something that I found strange but meaningful. After six months from the happened, you tweeted this...a strange question: "What does it even mean when a girl say she's gonna rape you? Is it even possible?" You wrote this, isn't it right?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I don't remember... I think my intent was just to... kind of ask in my personal way to the people of my age if they've been through a similar situation. I hoped that even other people could help me in answering to this question.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, in your mind after six months from what had happened there's still something going on... you're asking somebody else if they've been through a similar situation...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah...

MASSIMO GILETTI: Did you ever open up to a friend? I mean, you didn't tell anybody about what had happened in that room?

JIMMY BENNETT: I kept it to myself.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok. So now we're now getting to a meaningful step... something that questions Jimmy's intellectual integrity. Jimmy kept silent for a long time. At a certain point Asia became leader of the "me too" movement, a movement where all women give voice to important declarations also against Weinstein or any other men committing abuses on the workplace. I'll show you this clip of Asia, speaking in a popular Italian TV show.

(CLIP, ASIA SPEAKING: "I'm proud of what I said, of all the hell raising now and all the women who are reporting what they've been through, anonymously or not. This is an important time for our country, for us as women, because it's not just about the show business, as you can see on the internet, it's about any workplace. It's a revolutionary phase and I'm proud to be part of this female revolution, without sounding rhetoric. This is all true, because we're hundreds, we're not in anymore. Violence can happen also if a man puts his hand on our knee. This is violence as well, this will not be allowed anymore and I want men to be scared of us, just as we were scared of them when we were entering rooms and they were touching and cooing us on the shoulders.")

MASSIMO GILETTI: This happened at the peak of Weinstein's case, the case of this big American producer who has been charged by a lot of famous American stars of sexual harassment. Among those stars there is also Asia Argento. Have you ever heard this? Have you ever heard this statement?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I've seen a couple of those by Asia... not that interview.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Weinstein's case came in the limelight in October 2017; the entire world spoke about his abuses and sexual harassment. Jimmy was struck by these words. After the commercial, we will understand why those words probably pushed Jimmy to make a choice.

(Commercial)

MASSIMO GILETTI: Here we are again. Behind me you can see the face of Asia Argento that I guess is watching this interview tonight, with JIMMY BENNETT; his accuser. I want to thank also Attorney Sattro, who is following this interview... because, Attorney, maybe you can also take legal action in Italy...

ATTORNEY SATTRO: Yeah! So, there are several options according to what will happen in the next months. What matters to Jimmy are the damages. However, if Asia keeps on making these attacks on Jimmy, we will appeal.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, clear. You say that what really matters is finding an agreement on the damages. So we're entering in the monetary issue. Why did I show you the clip before? Let's remind that even at Cannes film festival, last spring, Asia Argento heavily charged Weinstein. She said "It's enough! We can't go on like this. Men need to be scared and this man needs to understand he's done! His story is over, he has to respect women." He (pointing at Jimmy) hears about the movement, listens to the voices of the movement and thinks that Asia in that case is a victim but to him she's been the executioner. Is this what you thought, Jimmy?

JIMMY BENNETT: I think I'm a little confused by the question...can you repeat that?

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, I'd like to understand why after so many years, four or five years, you decided to come out immediately after Asia became the symbol of the "me too" movement, a movement that says no to violence and abuses. Why you decided only at this point to send a letter asking for damages?

JIMMY BENNETT: I didn't want to discredit Asia or the movement, I was following her and thought she deserved credit for that. But I also thought that it would have been really difficult for people to believe to my story and I don't think it is fair. I thought it would have taken longer to defend myself and to show the truth of what I am claiming. I have been through a nightmare and now I am in front of an audience that doesn't believe in what I'm saying. It's ok, I don't blame anyone. But this is the hardest part, that's why I decided to break the silence.

MASSIMO GILETTI: It's clear that the audience is doubtful about your statements, it's normal. Because it's hard to understand that a young boy had a sexual intercourse with a woman and only after many years he comes up with that asking for damages...I think it's normal to have doubts on that. You don't have any and you say that the sexual intercourse you had turned your life upside down. So, you're asking for 3.500.000 euro, is it correct Attorney? The first request ...

ATTORNEY SATTRO: That's correct.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Three million and five hundred thousand euro, it's a lot! I mean...

ATTORNEY SATTRO: Yeah, it is a lot.

MASSIMO GILETTI: It had to be all secret...isn't it right? ...dollar or euro...it's ok, we can even use the old Italian currency (the host he's joking on that). Who decided to send this letter? Were you, Attorney?

ATTORNEY: Yes. So before talking about the movement "me too", the first thing we should talk about is if there's an evidence to bring to the court. So I told Jimmy that he could have sent a letter, but in order to make everything right, we had to send some evidence too. So I talked with him, we gathered the evidence, the events happened before and after the fact. We made a count of what Jimmy earned before the fact, and we also saw what his earnings were after that. Because all this had an impact not only on the economic side, but also on the relationships he has in Hollywood. We gathered an overwhelming amount of evidence. In our preliminary note of intent we showed a lot of photos, not only the one you've seen before, but all the photos that had been published on Asia's Instagram profile.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Attorney, so you're saying that Jimmy went through a shock that was so strong that he's never been contacted again for making a movie? Is this what you're saying?

Attorney: Right!

MASSIMO GILETTI: It's really hard to believe this. I mean, ok you've been through an abuse, but saying you didn't work anymore because of that...it's hard for me to believe, with all due respect to Jimmy.

ATTORNEY SATTRO: Yeah, psychological trauma for someone who's not an expert, it's difficult to understand. I have one brother in the Army who, when's on a mission, sees terrible things. And there are people who doubt about what he has seen. So, who is in charge of judging what could be the effect on a human being? A journalist or an expert? We called for an expert who analyzed Jimmy's effects.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Attorney, I think this is right...but as a journalist I have to give voice to a fact that seems to be like that, because objectively after many years you are making allegations to a person who is the leader of "me too" movement and you're aware of the burden of your act. Jimmy said "I didn't want to go publically with this against her", so we found a secret agreement. Can I use these words?

ATTORNEY: Well, as a statement in the note of intent it constitutes a public deed. Attorneys send them all the time, but if there are facts to be reported then you have to take legal action...

MASSIMO GILETTI: Did you contact Anthony Burdain's attorneys? Anthony Burdain has been one of...

ATTORNEY: No.

MASSIMO GILETTI: No, you didn't do that? The first action you took, I mean the letter...who received the letter with the request, sorry? Asia directly?

ATTORNEY: Ok, right. So, what we did is that I have access to a database where I found his agent and told him that I would have sent this letter to the person who had to receive this communication. Just to be clear, we had no idea of who were the Attorneys. I didn't know that Richard was working for the law firm of Asia Argento.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, but the request was made to people who were around Asia Argento. One of those people was one of the most famous people in the United States, the chef Anthony Burdain, who unfortunately got suicide some months ago and who was Asia's partner. The amount of the request was 3,5 million dollar. At this point Asia and Anthony had an argument that we summed up like this...let's see.

(On the screen. Anthony Burdain: "You're not paying off his silence. You're getting rid of a nuisance. It's just to help a poor stupid, anguished to put up the pieces of his life together" Asia Argento: "I'm not paying off his silence for something that is not true, moreover I'm broke." Anthony Burdain. "It's not an admission for something, neither you're trying to pay off his silence, It's just to help an anguished and desperate soul who's trying to set you up for money. You can even tell him to go to hell; in any case I'm with you.")

MASSIMO GILETTI: Ok, so these are text messages, emails... it's not totally clear, Asia will clarify this. Anyway, they have been exchanged between Asia and her partner. It seems like Asia didn't want to "pay off something she didn't do". While Anthony Burdain, American, famous... (Pointing at the attorney Sattro) by the way you were a fan of Anthony, weren't you?

Attorney: Yeah, I think most people were.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So, Burdain says “ok, let’s pay this money so we can get rid of this trouble” in America the less we talk about it, the better...he had a different point of view from Asia. What were the answers by Burdain to the first attempt of communication? Because it seems that some payments had been issued...for keeping Jimmy silent.

Attorney: What do you mean by answers from Burdain?

MASSIMO GILETTI: When you asked for 3.5 million dollar, someone must have answered you. We know that Burdain paid an amount close to 200.000 euro for sure. Am I wrong?

Attorney: That’s what has been reported. The contact we had, were with Richard Holstetter and Kelly Golberg. Kelly was part of Asia’s entourage. In the United States when you settle a case if you’re representing the defense, you deposit the amount on an Escrow account. We knew that the opposite side was the sender of the amount. And we knew that, rather than Burdain, was Asia’s family who contributed for this damages.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Asia gave the money to Jimmy? (At Jimmy) Did you get 200.000 euro? Can you confirm this? This is really important...I mean, a first payment was issued to keep all of this quiet...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, that’s correct.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Do you confirm 200.000 euro?

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, you’ve just confirmed what’s already known.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Of course! We need you to confirm in order to be sure. It’s a little amount in comparison with three million; do you keep on asking for three million dollar?

Attorney: It’s over.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So you’re not taking into account that 200.000 euro?

Attorney: No, we don’t want any more money. We’re not seeking for any more money.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Is it true that Asia didn’t pay anymore? That she stopped paying?

Attorney: Yes.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So they've been stopped. You found an agreement at least on 400.000 euro but it has been stopped.

Attorney: Right.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So I'm asking you this question. At a certain point this secrecy has been broken; it had to be all secret. Instead the New York Times published these payments that Asia or Burdain would have issued to Jimmy. Who gave this information?

Attorney: Nobody knows this; we had no interest in revealing this information. What I'm pretty sure enough is that it wasn't Asia for obvious reasons. So, it was somebody out of touch with the situation.

MASSIMO GILETTI: You never thought you could have destroyed Asia's life or career? I mean, because an allegation of this size is really harsh...as an image too. Jimmy...

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I'm not too concerned with that at all. I don't really...I'm sorry; I'm not concerned in her image. People need to make their own idea. I'm defending myself; I don't feel like I should be in this situation of even defending myself and convince anyone. You keep on asking me questions, "why it took me so long to charge Asia." So I can say in return, why the leaders of the "me too" movement didn't speak before? Even now, I am afraid to answer, because I feel that this interview has taken the wrong turn. If you want to hear my side of the story, this is it. I don't feel like we're going in the same way. I don't feel comfortable in this interview. I don't like to see the photo of Asia everywhere in the studio. We're here to tell my story.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Yes, but in Italy Asia is really popular and famous and she's an integrant part in this story. You make movies, you make music, and you do understand that television deals with the image so we cannot avoid showing Asia. But if you want I can take off this photo, because I respect your point, and put another image.

JIMMY BENNETT: That would be better. Thank you.

MASSIMO GILETTI: But I need to ask you something, that everybody thinks, Attorney. An amount of money like that is very high, and it seems like you waited for her to become a leader of the movement in order to strike her afterwards.

Attorney: When there's hypocrisy, what trick is involved? I don't see any trick there at all. And when you're making a claim you make a request which is able to prove what you've claimed. So I don't see any trick at all. Any plot behind.

MASSIMO GILETTI: So you're saying you have a lot of papers that can prove that.

Attorney: I think more than enough evidence is out. If the opposite happened, if the woman was a victim of the abuse, they wouldn't talk about this. It's a "me too" movement also for men. A movement in which we decide what an abuse is and what we can do about that.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Jimmy, do you think this story could affect the "me too" movement, considering that Asia is a symbol of that movement? Because someone said that it's a favor to Weinstein...to go against Asia, since she was one of the people who charged him...

JIMMY BENNETT: I don't think it's a favor at all. We saw many actresses who claimed against him. Asia's movement is pointing against all people misusing their power, and I felt the same feeling. I think that Asia adopted the same attitude. And I don't think this story is making any favor to Weinstein. My story is very personal and we're unveiling Asia's hypocrisy. Because I think Asia's behavior matches exactly Weinstein's one. Even Asia misused her power, she met me in a hotel, and she set up an appointment to show her power. I was 17 and...

MASSIMO GILETTI: So this is the news coming out from this interview. He says he was invited with the promise of making a movie...this is the different point coming out from this interview tonight. This is what I felt. He talks about a film, a promise...because Weinstein is a producer, a man with great power, while Asia has normal power. The comparison, Attorney, doesn't fit in my opinion. But if he says so...I respect what he says.

JIMMY BENNETT: Yeah, I think it's a matter of power. You know, Weinstein had a big production company, but also Asia was in a powerful position. I couldn't wait to take part in a movie with Asia. I love my job as an actor and I was ready to seize any kind of opportunity. Asia misused her power. There was no balance in the use of powers.

MASSIMO GILETTI: One last question. In Italy came out a news saying that when you turned 18 and decided to have access at your earnings, which till that age had been managed by your parents, they had disappeared. Do you confirm this?

JIMMY BENNETT: I don't wanna speak about that. Because I would involve other people that I want to remain out of this issue between me and Asia. I don't want to talk about my family.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Attorney, can you tell me if his relationships with his family are good or not?

JIMMY BENNETT: No, I don't wanna talk about this.

MASSIMO GILETTI: One last thing. Asia is watching us, I suppose. Would you like to say something to her?

JIMMY BENNETT: No, I don't think I need to.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Attorney, do you want to say something?

Attorney: No.

MASSIMO GILETTI: Thank you for being with us tonight. Good luck for your life...

JIMMY BENNETT: Thank you.

