

# [***Here Are The Right-Wing Figures From Donald Trump To Steve Bannon Championing Surprise Hit Sound Of Freedom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RV-WFB1-JBCM-F0MR-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

July 20, 2023 Thursday

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**Length:** 1008 words

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**Highlight:** Some right-wing commentators are interviewing the film s star and real-life inspiration, giving them unchecked opportunities to discuss conspiracy theories.

**Body**

**Topline**

**The Sound of Freedom** the surprise summer hit about child sex trafficking is bringing in big numbers at the box office despite controversy over its lead actor s QAnon ties, thanks to its immense popularity among conservative audiences and promotion by right-wing politicians and media figures ranging from Donald Trump to Sean Hannity.

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"Sound of Freedom" star Jim Caviezel has given interviews to numerous right-wing hosts to promote the film. (Photo by Ilya S. Savenok/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Former President Donald Trump held a**Sound of Freedom** screeningat his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, on Wednesday, with Trump allies Steve Bannon, Kari Lake and more in attendance.

After the screening, Trump posted a campaign video to his social media platform, Truth Social, praising the film and promising to use Title 42 a pandemic-erapolicyTrump enacted to stop migrants at the border from seeking asylum during a health crisis to end child trafficking and to urge Congress to issue the death penalty for child traffickers.

Trump whoappointedTim Ballard, the film s inspiration, to a State Department human trafficking advisory council in 2019 and hasreportedlymade exaggerated claims about human trafficking previously shared the trailer to the film on Truth Social, stating Ben Carson had urged him to post it.

Sean Hannityinterviewedthe film s star, Jim Caviezel, on his Fox News show Tuesday, praising his work in the film and urging his viewers to see it because people need to know this evil exists.

Conservative professor and podcast host Jordan PetersoninterviewedCaviezel and the film s real-life inspiration, former government agent Tim Ballard, in a lengthy discussion where Ballard said he condemns most of what he sees with conspiracy theories, but claimed children in Africa suffer from adrenochrome harvesting referencing a conspiracy theory that baselessly claims the blood of children is forcibly taken to develop a chemical that is consumed to stay young.

On Bannon s podcast, Caviezel alsoespousedthe adrenochrome theory, claiming the demand for the chemical is to blame for child trafficking, and falsely stating it is "10 times more potent than heroin" and "has some mystical qualities as far as making you look younger."

Caviezel also appeared on a conservative YouTube show hosted by Benny Johnson, where the two largely discussed religion, lamenting the alleged removal of God from movies and said Christians are marginalized.

Johnson asked Caviezel to respond to the media s criticism of**Sound of Freedom**, to which he said he hoped a millstone be hung around their necks, that they be cast into the sea should they ever hurt one of these little ones, areferenceto the Matthew 18:6 Bible verse.

Some elected officials are championing the film, including Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), whotweeted Wow. Wow. Wow. GO SEE #SoundOfFreedom.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) held ascreeningof the film for the House of Representatives Tuesday evening, where he wasjoinedby Caviezel and Ballard, praising it as a call to action to combat child trafficking wherever the evil exists.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.)praisedMcCarthy for hosting the screening andtweetedthat she looks forward to stopping evil, referring to child sex trafficking and child pornography.

**Key Background**

**The Sound of Freedom** stars Caviezel as Ballard, following a fictionalized pursuit to rescue Honduran children who were kidnapped to Colombia based on Ballard s real-life rescue missions. Ballard, who once worked for the Department of Homeland Security, is the founder of Operation Underground Railroad, an organization that conducts sting operations to rescue children from sex traffickers. The film has stirred controversy and become a culture war target because of Caviezel s ties to conspiracy theories and investigativereportssuggesting Operation Underground Railroad has exaggerated its role in sex-trafficking rescues. Caviezel has previously spoken at conventions for QAnon, theconspiracy theorythat a core group of Satan-worshiping global elites run the world, and are involved in a global child trafficking ring. Both Caviezel and Ballard have voiced openness to the adrenochrome conspiracy theory, and Ballard previouslysuggestedsupport for the debunked theory that furniture retailer Wayfair was selling children online. The film has a 74% critics rating on Rotten Tomatoes, with some publications, like**Variety**,praisedit as a compelling movie that shines an authentic light on one of the crucial criminal horrors of our time. Others were more critical, like**Rolling Stone**, whichcriticizedit for fetishizing the torture of child victims and considered it a gateway to far-right conspiracy theories.

**Contra**

Neal Harmon, chief executive of the film s distributor Angel Studios,told**The New York Times**: Anybody who watches this film knows that this film is not about conspiracy theories, claiming it s not about ***politics***.

**Chief Critics**

Because Ballard and Caviezel have spoken of conspiracy theories in interviews with right-wing personalities while promoting**The Sound of Freedom**, the film is being marketed to QAnon believers, Mike Rothschild, a journalist who wrote**The Storm Is Upon Us: How QAnon Became a Movement, Cult, and Conspiracy Theory of Everything**,toldNPR.

**Big Number**

$100 million. That s how much**The Sound of Freedom** hasgrossedat the domestic box office so far since its July 4 opening. That s a bigger domestictotalthis year than hit films like**M3GAN**,**Cocaine Bear**,**Air** and**Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves**. It s the 16th highest grossing domestic film this year and it s within $10 million of surpassing**The Flash** and**Scream VI**.

**Further Reading**

Box Office Hit Sound Of Freedom Controversy Including QAnon Ties And False Claims Theaters Are Sabotaging Screenings Explained(Forbes)

The Adrenochrome Conspiracy Theory Pushed By Sound Of Freedom Star Explained(Forbes)

Jim Caviezel s Faith-Based Thriller Sound of Freedom Crosses $100 Million at Box Office(Variety)

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2023

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