

## Actor and Activist: Susan Sarandon [C1]

È una delle attrici più prestigiose di Hollywood, nonché un'attivista instancabile che da anni si impegna per una lunga serie di cause, dall'opposizione alla guerra in Iraq fino alla difesa dei diritti dei lavoratori, o dei migranti.



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Susan Sarandon is an Oscar-winning actor [renowned](#) for her [commitment](#) to social justice. Born in Queens, New York in 1946, she is of British and Italian descent. Sarandon studied drama in the late 1960s, a crucial time in US social history. Since then the seventy-six-year-old has consistently aligned her career with her progressive values.

### **CULT & ICONIC**

Sarandon's first role as a [disaffected](#) teen in the movie Joe (1970) was followed by playing Janet Weiss in the cult movie The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975). Her first Oscar nomination was for romantic-gangster movie Atlantic City (1981), and she was nominated again for playing Louise in the iconic feminist film Thelma & Louise (1991). Her Oscar win for Dead Man

Walking (1995), directed by her [then-husband](#) Tim Robbins, reflected their concern with abolishing the death penalty and ending mass incarceration in the US.

## **POWER COUPLE**

Sarandon and Robbins [leveraged](#) their fame to political ends: they marched against the 2003 invasion of Iraq and campaigned for Democratic nominees, from John Kerry to Barack Obama to Bernie Sanders. However, Sarandon's refusal [to back](#) Democrat Hillary Clinton against Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election met with [rage](#) on social media. She later defended her decision, saying, "I did think she [Clinton] was very, very dangerous. We would still be fracking, we would be at war [if she were president]".

## **HELP FOR HOLLYWOOD**

While her most accl[aimed](#) movies are from the 1990s, Sarandon has continued to break taboos as an 'older' woman in her line of work. Nevertheless, Sarandon often criticises Hollywood, condemning its [profit-oriented focus](#) and its persistence in [leaning](#) on female, racial and LGBT+ stereotypes.

## **STREAMING PLATFORMS**

Sarandon believes that the most provocative movies and series are now the products of studios owned by streaming platforms. In 2017, she was [praised](#) for her [portrayal](#) of actor Bette Davis in the first season of FX's anthology series [Feud](#). But she also supports writers who have been profoundly affected by changes in the industry. According to the Writers [Guild](#) of America, "an [ever-growing](#) demand for [scripted content](#) has transformed an industry that once supported stable writing careers into a gig economy of precarious, low-paying freelance work."

## PEOPLE OVER PROFIT

To find out more about the issues that concern Susan Sarandon, Speak Up attended a press conference in Barcelona that honoured her acting career. As a high profile figure she is, she says, in an enviable position that it is her public duty to use well. She began by saying how [grateful](#) she was for European support at times when opinion in the US had turned against her.

**Susan Sarandon** (American accent): It's always nice to be recognised in another country. Sometimes I haven't been so welcome in the United States. I worry about a [lack](#) of empathy, kindness, the tendency to put profit over people in terms of... everything: the government, the environment, justice of every kind. I think the systems that we have [in place](#) now are so corrupt that they are disintegrating and when that [vacuum](#) happens it [paves the way](#) for fascism.

## CRISIS IN HOLLYWOOD

Sarandon's most recent role is as a [ruthless](#) businesswoman in the superhero film Blue [Beetle](#). She told Speak Up that while she loved taking part, it is a [shame](#) that Hollywood is now really only interested in making [blockbusters](#). **Susan Sarandon**: It's impossible now to make a lot of movies in the United States. There's a crisis in Hollywood where you can make small independent films and you [can] make big blockbuster films but the ones that were in the middle, ... ten million dollars, twenty million dollars... they're not happening. And then if you make a small film then the question is, where do you distribute that film? And I think that a lot of the streaming services are able to make much more [edgy](#) stories because they're not trying to appeal to a [broad](#) demographic, they can find a very specific demographic so a lot of the more interesting things, more political things are happening in these TV series now.

## CRISIS IN MAY

Sarandon's arrest for [disorderly conduct](#) at a [minimum wage](#) protest in New York in May came days after she showed support for the Writers [Guild](#)

of America strike in California, which condemned the precarious conditions faced by today's screen writers. Sarandon believes that in any profession respect for others must be prioritised over profit. Her activism is [aimed](#) at starting a conversation, she says. **Susan Sarandon:** It starts with respect for other human beings. My favourite thing is always to have conversations. I'm interested in what people have to say. Talking about myself ultimately for hours on end is pretty [soul-sucking](#)! It's much more interesting to find out what people are interested in and to make contact.

## OFF THE GRID

Sarandon is a mother of three and has three grandchildren. She talks more about how fortunate she is and of her plans to spend more time with them. **Susan Sarandon:** I've been building a house that is completely off the grid, so it has solar [energy] and my own water. I love gardening. I play with my grandkids. I spend as much time as I can with them. I've always kept [scrap books](#) for my family: I'm always making these collections of family photos, and I steal my children's photos that are online and I print them, so I have those photos too.

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# Glossary

- **vacuum** = vuoto
- **edgy** = provocatorie, audaci
- **renowned** = rinomata
- **leveraged** = fare leva
- **rage** = ira
- **paves the way** = fare strada
- **ruthless** = senza scrupoli
- **disorderly conduct** = disturbo della quiete pubblica
- **commitment** = impegno
- **then-husband** = allora marito
- **portrayal** = ritratto
- **scripted content** = contenuto sceneggiato
- **lack** = mancanza
- **in place** = in atto, esistenti
- **scrap books** = album di ricordi
- **to back** = sostenere
- **praised** = lodare
- **soul-sucking** = da sfinimento (lett. che succhia l'anima)
- **broad** = ampia
- **minimum wage** = salario minimo
- **profit-oriented focus** = obiettivo incentrato sul profitto
- **grateful** = grata
- **Beetle** = scarafaggio
- **shame** = peccato
- **blockbusters** = successi, grandi produzioni
- **leaning** = appoggiarsi
- **Guild** = sindacato, associazione
- **ever-growing** = sempre in crescita
- **aimed** = mirare a
- **disaffected** = insoddisfatta
- **Feud** = contesa, rivalità