

Spike Lee Quotes

*People, Thinking, Trying, Film, Want, White, New York, Character, Art, Black,
Racism, Believe, Men, Dream, America, Media, Independent, Kids, Stories,
Artist*

There's an unwritten law that you cannot have a Jewish character in a film who isn't 100 percent perfect, or you're labeled anti-Semitic.

~Spike Lee

I think black people have to be in control of their own image because film is a powerful medium. We can't just sit back and let other people define our existence.

~Spike Lee

I'm just trying to tell a good story and make thought-provoking, entertaining films. I just try and draw upon the great culture we have as a people, from music, novels, the streets.

~Spike Lee

I think it is very important that films make people look at what they've forgotten.

~Spike Lee

It gets dangerous when you start allowing people to validate your work.

~Spike Lee

Don't think that because you haven't heard from me for a while that I went to sleep. I am still here, like a spirit roaming the night. Thirsty, hungry, seldom stopping to rest.

~Spike Lee

When you love something it's not a job anymore.

~Spike Lee

All directors are storytellers, so the motivation was to tell the story I wanted to tell. That's what I love.

~Spike Lee

American slavery was not a Sergio Leone Spaghetti Western. It was a

holocaust. My ancestors are slaves. Stolen from Africa. I will honor them.

~Spike Lee

Power is knowing your past.

~Spike Lee

I think people who have faults are a lot more interesting than people who are perfect.

~Spike Lee

I ain't Martin Luther King. I don't need a dream. I have a plan.

~Spike Lee

I may have been born yesterday, but I stayed up all night.

~Spike Lee

It comes down to this: black people were stripped of our identities when we were brought here, and it's been a quest since then to define who we are.

~Spike Lee

Those that'll tell don't know, and those that know won't tell.

~Spike Lee

I don't think my films are going to get rid of racism or prejudice. I think the best thing my films can do is provoke discussion.

~Spike Lee

There's a lot of Americans, black and white, who think that we've arrived where we need to be and nothing else needs to be done and affirmative action needs to be dismantled.

~Spike Lee

As a people we do not need anyone else's stamp of approval.

~Spike Lee

I don't think racism can be eliminated in my lifetime ... or my children's or grandchildren's. But I think it's something we have to strive for. I'm going to keep working toward that day coming.

~Spike Lee

Making films has got to be one of the hardest endeavors known to humankind.

~Spike Lee

Fight the power that be. Fight the power.

~Spike Lee

I like to work with the same people when I can, and you want to get people with the same interests that you have, and the same aesthetic.

~Spike Lee

It has been my observation that parents kill more dreams than anybody.

~Spike Lee

You have to do the research. If you don't know about something, then you ask the right people who do.

~Spike Lee

I wouldn't be doing motherfu**ing films for almost three decades if every time I did something that someone didn't like I went in a fu**ing cocoon and just hid there and didn't make my art.

~Spike Lee

A lot of times you get credit for stuff in your movies you didn't intend to be there.

~Spike Lee

Any film I do is not going to change the way black women have been portrayed, or black people have been portrayed, in cinema since the days of D.W. Griffith.

~Spike Lee

I don't get tripped up in technology. I use technology as a tool. 'Oldboy' we shot Two Pro 35mm. For 'Da Blood of Jesus,' we shot digitally. We shot the new Sony F55. It's a 4K camera.

~Spike Lee

Critics like to build you up, tear you down, and then, if you're lucky, build you up again.

~Spike Lee

If you can't take a hit, you're not going to last long, that's for sure.

~Spike Lee

I'm very careful about how I portray violence in my films. I do believe that violence, especially violent video games, are not a good thing for young kids.

~Spike Lee

America doesn't have the moral right to tell other people what to do. To say the whole world has to fall into line is you-know-what. I hope more people will rise up.

~Spike Lee

Any time you talk about the look of the film, it's not just the director and the director of photography. You have to include the costume designer and the production designer.

~Spike Lee

A lot of times, we censor ourselves before the censor even gets there.

~Spike Lee

I think it would be very boring dramatically to have a film where everybody was a lawyer or doctor and had no faults. To me, the most important thing is to be truthful.

~Spike Lee

I really don't deal with hypotheticals.

~Spike Lee

Since the days of slavery, if you were a good singer or dancer, it was your job to perform for the master after dinner.

~Spike Lee

We've gone through the namesâ€”Negro, African American, African, Black. For me that's an indication of a people still trying to find their identity. Who determines what is black?

~Spike Lee

What's the difference between Hollywood characters and my characters? Mine are real.

~Spike Lee

Our greatness, our talent has never been the question. It's been a matter of grappling for control over what we do.

~Spike Lee

It is really important that young people find something that they want to do and pursue it with passion. I'm very passionate about filmmaking. It's what I love to do.

~Spike Lee

I live in New York City, the stories of my films take place in New York;

I'm a New York filmmaker.

~Spike Lee

Cause no better makes it no better.

~Spike Lee

I'm not the go-to guy. Everybody is trying to tell their story and have different ways of telling it.

~Spike Lee

My cousin Malcolm Lee is also a filmmaker.

~Spike Lee

People of color have a constant frustration of not being represented, or being misrepresented, and these images go around the world.

~Spike Lee

I collect names for characters. Names are valuable; they can be your first source of insight into a character.

~Spike Lee

I never understood the concept of showing everything in the trailer. Why go to a movie if there's no surprise? I can't do it like that.

~Spike Lee

'25th Hour,' like a lot of my films, takes place in New York City. I've been very fortunate to make films in the city that I live. I mean, it's great going home at night instead of being on location.

~Spike Lee

Surprises are good. I'm not of the thinking where you tell the audience everything. Sometimes I don't even want to see the trailers. You see the trailer, you've seen the movie.

~Spike Lee

I'd like to state that Spike Lee is not saying that African American culture is just for black people alone to enjoy and cherish. Culture is for everybody.

~Spike Lee

We grew up in a very creative environment and were exposed to the arts at a very young age, so it's not a surprise that all of us are in some form of the arts.

~Spike Lee

Music is, for me, a great tool of a filmmaker, the same way cinematography, the acting, editing, post-production, the costumes are. You know, to help you tell a story.

~Spike Lee

I want to tell stories, I don't really try to get boxed in by a specific genre.

~Spike Lee

The truth is I've been doing Kickstarter before there was Kickstarter; there was no Internet. Social Media was writing letters, making phone calls, beating the bushes.

~Spike Lee

I give interracial couples a look. Daggers. They get uncomfortable when they see me on the street.

~Spike Lee

We're the most violent nation on earth. There's no getting away from that. But you've got to look at it on a broader level.

~Spike Lee

And one thing Hollywood does well is sequels.

~Spike Lee

I miss my brother. Prince was a funny cat. Great sense of humor.

~Spike Lee

My people, my people, what can I say; say what I can. I saw it but didn't believe it; I didn't believe what I saw. Are we gonna live together?
Together are we gonna live?

~Spike Lee

Stick around long enough, you'll get some grace.

~Spike Lee

Everybody does what they want to do for their own specific reasons.

~Spike Lee

I've never seen black men with fine white women. They be ugly. Mugly dogs.

~Spike Lee

For me, I believe in God, God is real.

~Spike Lee

I didn't dream about being a director. I didn't know I wanted to do something with film until the summer between my sophomore and junior years at Morris College in Atlanta, Georgia.

~Spike Lee

I'll be vilified if I shoot a film in Toronto for New York. And rightfully so!

~Spike Lee

I am a hybrid. I do independent films and also do Hollywood films - I love them both.

~Spike Lee

I had a great education. From kindergarten to John Dewey High School

in Coney Island, I am public-school educated.

~Spike Lee

I am very fortunate I can send my kids to private school, but everybody does not have the money. If you cannot get your kid in a good school today, your kids are going to be behind the eight ball.

~Spike Lee

I don't see any negativity with what Brad Pitt is doing with his Make It Right Foundation, or what Sean Penn is trying to do in Haiti.

~Spike Lee

He revolutionized music videos. Before Michael Jackson, MTV refused to play African-American artists.

~Spike Lee

I like people to look like they're floating.

~Spike Lee

I'm surprised that Hollywood and networks have not been diverse as other industries.

~Spike Lee

If you have a talented family, you should be shot if you don't use them.

~Spike Lee

'Do the Right Thing' was my first union film. I looked at the rosters, and for the most part, it was white males. Especially the Teamsters. So we had some conversations.

~Spike Lee

One of the great things about African-Americans is that we've always had this attitude: We make do with what we got. It comes from our ancestors being slaves.

~Spike Lee

You know that first of all your films have to make money no matter who you are.

~Spike Lee

I'm worried just as much about Donald Trump as that crazy guy in North Korea - and he has a nuclear code. I'm worrying about that.

~Spike Lee

I'm trying to keep up with what's happening in this turbulent world.

~Spike Lee

Because many advances have happened, we've lost the urgency (and that's just human nature) that we had before, when we couldn't vote, couldn't use mass transportation, or drink from the fountains.

~Spike Lee

I've been blessed with the opportunity to express the views of black people who otherwise don't have access to power and the media. I have to take advantage of that while I'm still bankable.

~Spike Lee

Racism in America absolutely exists - it is an issue. We need to fix it. We're a great country - probably the greatest country but we could be a hell of a lot greater.

~Spike Lee

Sex and racism have always been tied together. Look at the thousands of black men who got lynched and castrated. The reason the Klan came into being was to protect white southern women.

~Spike Lee

I've always tried to - when I've been able to - support young artists, no

matter what medium.

~Spike Lee

I knew I was never going to play professional sport, but I loved playing and I went to all the games I could afford to.

~Spike Lee

I tend to favour films that have multiple plot and story lines, multiple characters and ensemble pieces.

~Spike Lee

Most human beings will not stand in front of a stage and tell you about the bad things they did.

~Spike Lee

I've got "Sometimers." Sometimes I remember and sometimes I forget.

~Spike Lee

I think if people looked at my body of work, they'd see a great breadth of work.

~Spike Lee

I am trying to stay away from this position of me "returning to my roots." As if my roots are that I'm only comfortable working on low-budget, small films. That's not the case at all.

~Spike Lee

If people go to IMDB, they will see that I'm very comfortable with independent cinema, and doing studio films too. For me this is not an either/or situation.

~Spike Lee

I think my work shows that I love women. I understand where these types of criticisms are coming from because black people have been so

dogged out in the media, they're just extra sensitive.

~Spike Lee

'She's Gotta Have It' was shot in twelve days and two six-day weeks.

~Spike Lee

I always give the example, if you turn on the radio today, black radio, Lenny Kravitz is not black. Bob Marley wasn't black: in the beginning, only white college stations played Bob Marley.

~Spike Lee

Amongst black people, you have always heard it said that once a black man reaches a certain level, especially if you are an entertainer, you get a white trophy woman. I didn't make that up.

~Spike Lee

Everything I do is always scrutinised. But that's all I'll say about that.

~Spike Lee

I get offered to do stuff where the money's nice but it's not something I want to do - I get offered a lot of commercials too.

~Spike Lee

I don't dictate, you don't dictate to Stevie Wonder, not successfully.

~Spike Lee

First of all, what in this world does not revolve around money? But money is a big part of film, unlike a lot of other art forms.

~Spike Lee

I don't like acting; not in front of the camera.

~Spike Lee

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