

## In Harvey Weinstein saga, young lives forever altered

Overwhelmingly, the victims were actresses making their first steps into the movies; after their experiences they retreated, disgusted and disillusioned

By [JAKE COYLE](#) 14 October 2017, 8:17 am



This combination photo shows some of the actresses listed in alphabetical order, top row from left, Asia Argento, Rosanna Arquette, Jessica Barth, Cara Delevingne, Romola Garai, Judith Godreche, Heather Graham, Angelina Jolie who have made allegations against producer Harvey Weinstein. (AP Photo/File)

NEW YORK (AP) — Katherine Kendall was 23 and fresh out of acting school when she met him. A former ballet dancer working hard to launch herself as an actress, she had just landed a good agent and was juggling a schedule packed with auditions.

“He was so warm when I met him and so inviting. He made me feel he was going to take me under his wing,” Kendall, now 48, recalled in an interview with The Associated Press. “He literally said, ‘Welcome to the Miramax family.’”

Her meeting with Harvey Weinstein, she thought, was going really well.

Weinstein gave her scripts to read and took her to a movie screening at an Upper West Side theater, she said. When they exited, he said he needed to stop at his apartment. There, after spending some time talking, she said, Weinstein came back from the bathroom in a robe and asked for a massage. When she hesitated, Weinstein implored, “Everybody does it,” Kendall recalled. She fled after he



Katherine Kendall poses with her dog Belladonna in Los Angeles on Friday, Oct. 13, 2017. Kendall told The New York Times that in 1993, when she was 23, she went to producer Harvey Weinstein’s New York apartment for a business meeting. When he returned from the bathroom, he was wearing a robe and asked for a massage. She refused. He later chased her around the room naked and asked to see her breasts. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

Like variations of a scene shot over and over again, there have been common hallmarks in the disturbing allegations leveled against Weinstein in the past week by some 30 women: A bathrobe. A request for a massage. A suggestion that it’s simply the way things work in the movie business.

Another tragic repetition has been in the women who say Weinstein preyed upon them. Overwhelmingly, they constitute young actresses making their first steps into the movies — vulnerable Hollywood hopefuls looking for a part, a movie, their big break.

“We were all so young,” Kendall said. “He must have enjoyed on some level watching us squirm.”

As much as the Weinstein scandal is about the downfall of a Hollywood titan and the male-dominated industry many say he's symptomatic of, it's also about the women who have come forward. Many of those who have spoken about their encounters with Weinstein include well-known actresses like Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie who largely managed to pivot their careers away from Weinstein. But others, after such a first impression with the movie business, retreated from it, disgusted and disillusioned.



In this photo from December 2, 2014, Harvey Weinstein attends the season premiere of the Netflix series 'Marco Polo' in New York. (Andy Kropa/Invision/AP, File)

"It took a big chunk out of my drive," said Kendall. "It made me wonder: Am I in over my head? Am I in a business where this happens all the time and I don't know it? I'm not going to be able to play this game, so maybe this just isn't for me."

"I went in with my best self, thinking I'm giving my best meeting," said Kendall, who first recounted her encounter to The New York Times. "And I come out with that. You feel sort of like, 'God, maybe this whole time they were just playing me. Maybe I have nothing interesting to say at all.' There's a lot of self-doubt that can pile on after something like that happens."

Sallie Hofmeister, Weinstein's representative, said the embattled movie mogul was unavailable for comment. Weinstein previously responded to some of the collective sexual harassment allegations by saying that "the way I've behaved with colleagues in the past has caused a lot of pain, and I sincerely apologize for it." Three women — Asia Argento, Rose McGowan and Lucia Evans — have alleged that Weinstein sexually assaulted them. Said Hofmeister: "Any allegations of non-consensual sex are unequivocally denied by Mr. Weinstein."

Evans, a college student and aspiring actress when she met Weinstein, told *The New Yorker* that Weinstein forced her to perform oral sex on him at the Miramax Tribeca offices in 2004. She's now a marketing consultant. Dawn Dunning, a 24-year-old in 2003, told the *Times* that Weinstein said, "You'll never make it in this business," after she refused to have a three-some with him. Dunning gave up acting and became a costume designer.

Tomi-Ann Roberts was an aspiring actress in 1984 when Weinstein held an audition for her from his bathtub and told her she would need to get naked for him if she wanted to play the character in question, she told the *Times*. She's now a psychology professor at Colorado College. Her experience with Weinstein, she told the *Denver Post*, was "foundational" in her academic interest: sexual objectification.

That Weinstein allegedly used the audition process and the promise of movie roles to lure young actresses, is to veteran casting director Cindy Tolan, a corruption of the casting profession.

"This is by no means reflective in any way as to what a 'casting process' is and it is derogatory to all casting directors and their art form when it is referred to as such, similarly the term 'casting couch,'" said Tolan. "That is not what this is. This is sexual assault, aggression and rape."

Women in Film, a nonprofit advocating gender parity in Hollywood, has suggested three correctives to the industry: gender inclusive boards (the Weinstein Co.'s was all male), inclusive hiring practices "from the top down," and lasting legal penalties for "crimes of discrimination."

"It really comes down to changing the culture within the industry and having a zero tolerance policy and a code of conduct that doesn't allow for this to happen in small companies or big companies," said Kirsten Schaffer, the group's executive director. "One of the fastest solutions is for men to call out the behavior when they see it."

Kendall had previously only spoken about her encounter to friends and family. "The next day I was crying on my mom's shoulder," she remembers. She opted to go on the record after Ashley Judd came forward with her story with Weinstein, the first big-name to do so.



Ashley Judd (Genevieve, Flickr, via Wikipedia)

“I thought: I can stand by her. She doesn’t know me, but I can stand by her,” said Kendall. “This is for all the women that this has happened to. I’m going to stand by them right now. There’s no reason I need to carry this anymore.”

Kendall spoke for an hour by phone from her Los Angeles home where her Chihuahua and a visiting friend’s parrot occasionally interrupted. Her voice quivered at times with emotion but she mostly spoke with resolution, gratitude for the other accusers and with a hard-earned sense of closure.

“I heard (attorney) Gloria Allred say the other day on CNN: ‘Sexual harassment harms people,’” said Kendall. “And it’s true. It does. Your body remembers the trauma. Your heart remembers the trauma. It changes you and makes you make decisions about life, like, I’m going to go in another direction. You don’t know the harm it can do.”

Kendall works as a photographer and sometimes teaches dance, but she has continued to sporadically act and appears in the upcoming celebrity satire “An L.A. Minute,” with Gabriel Byrne.

Since first speaking out, she says she's been inundated by women with their own stories of harassment and assault.

As alone as she felt in 1993, Kendall now feels a profound unity with the other women who have recounted their meetings with Weinstein.

"When I look back at myself, I see that girl feeling like the alien in the room," said Kendall. "I'm a grown-up now. But let's say 10 years ago, five years ago his name was brought up, my heart would beat. I would feel alone in the room.

"Now, I'm not going to feel that way."

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