

‘It Really Took a Village Of Women to Do This’

Key Figures in #MeToo Movement And Legal Scholars React to the Verdict

By JODI KANTOR, MEGAN TWOHEY, GRACE ASHFORD, CATRIN EINHORN and ELLEN GABLER

Harvey Weinstein was one of the most powerful tastemakers in Hollywood. Now, after a Manhattan jury convicted him of two felony sex crimes, he faces the prospect of years in prison.

While the New York case was narrowly focused — the criminal charges centered largely on just two women — its symbolism was sweeping. More than 90 women have accused Mr. Weinstein of sexual misconduct, and the allegations against him set off the global #MeToo movement.

Mr. Weinstein is the first high-profile man to be ousted from a position of power during the movement and then criminally prosecuted. (He has denied all allegations of nonconsensual sex.)

Moments after the jury announced its decision on Monday, The New York Times asked some of Mr. Weinstein’s accusers, other stakeholders in the #MeToo movement and legal experts to interpret the verdict’s meaning.

Their responses have been edited and condensed.



ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

“I did it for all of us. I did it for the women who couldn’t testify. I couldn’t not do it. My biggest fear was him being found not guilty. I’m very relieved. But he wasn’t found guilty on all of the counts, so I feel like it was a victory, but not a complete victory.”

DAWN DUNNING, former actress who served as one of several supporting witnesses at Mr. Weinstein’s trial.



LUCY NICHOLSON/REUTERS

ASHLEY JUDD

First actress to publicly accuse Mr. Weinstein of sexual misconduct.

The story of #MeToo, of what the movement is about, is that men no longer have tacit permission to use their power or prestige to sexually access girls’ and women’s bodies. Their power and position cannot be used in secret or in the open to exploit asymmetry of power. There will be consequences in the courtroom, in employment and in society. This is the way it’s supposed to be. This is the way it’s supposed to be. And I think that Harvey’s guilty verdict demonstrates how overwhelmingly guilty he was. A perpetrator has to be overwhelmingly guilty for justice to be served at this time.



HEATHER STEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TARANA BURKE

Activist who started the original #MeToo movement more than a decade ago.

Most of us will never see the inside of the courtroom, but these women got to take the stand, look him in the eye and say, “You did this to me.” He will forever be guilty. That’s a thing we have.



SEAN SMITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

FATIMA GOSS GRAVES

President of the National Women’s Law Center.

This moment we are in is an opportunity to disrupt the story of a typical survivor, and to disrupt the story of a typical response. When I think about the last two years, we’ve seen important examples of individual accountability. I have great hope that individuals in this case have a measure of justice around them. But the last two years have been bigger than one individual. They’ve been about systems changing, creating new norms and laws that will propel us further in the future. I’m hopeful about the future.



RACHEL WOOLF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

AYA GRUBER

Former defense lawyer who is now a law professor at the University of Colorado.

I have mixed reactions about the whole case. On the one hand, I am myself a sexual assault survivor and I believe that the #MeToo movement is good. On the other hand, as a former defense attorney, hinging the future of women’s rights on a criminal conviction is a little troubling to me. The thought that one case could be representative of the entire world of victims and defendants is just wrong. But that’s what happened in this case. It became symbolic of not just the entire universe of sexual assault cases, but the entire women’s movement.



DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

IRWIN REITER

Mr. Weinstein’s corporate accountant for 30 years, he provided information to The Times that allowed it to break the story of Mr. Weinstein’s alleged misbehavior in 2017.

When they said it was seven men on the jury, I said: good. Because most men are just as appalled by his behavior. It’s time for men who witness bad behavior to have the courage to step up and bear witness to it. Never ever forget that these abused women can be your daughter.



LEXEY SWALL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

LUCIA EVANS

Her accusation of sexual assault against Mr. Weinstein was dropped from the New York case.

I am so impressed by the women who participated in the criminal case up through the verdict. Witnessing firsthand many of the obstacles that stood in their way only deepens my appreciation of their courage. I truly wish I was given the opportunity to stand next to them, to see my case through to the end. Hopefully this gives more women the strength to come forward. It really took a village of women to do this.



JASON HENRY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ROWENA CHIU

Former assistant at Miramax, the production company founded by Harvey Weinstein and his brother, Bob. She accused Mr. Weinstein of assaulting her on the job in 1998.

The #MeToo movement is much, much bigger than what happens to Harvey. This is certainly a moment of great encouragement and a milestone for me personally and the movement as a whole. In some ways, I feel that the life I’ve built today, every day that I live and enjoy my life is a victory over Harvey. That is much more meaningful than going for a legal victory.



BARBARA P. FERNANDEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ISABELLE KIRSHNER

Former Manhattan prosecutor turned criminal defense lawyer who has represented men accused of sexual assault.

This wasn’t “Believe all women,” and certainly not “Believe everything women are saying.” Had they believed all women, and what all the women said, he would have been convicted on all charges. It looks like they were fairly careful on what they decided.



KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JANE MANNING

Former Queens prosecutor who is director of the Women’s Equal Justice Project.

It’s a historic day. A predator who was once untouchable has finally been held accountable. All of the women who spoke out about Harvey Weinstein are heroes: the ones who received a guilty verdict, and the many who didn’t.



ERIN SCHAFF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

DEBRA KATZ

Civil rights and employment lawyer, has represented several people who have spoken out about Mr. Weinstein.

I felt some measure of justice had been done. He is now a convicted rapist. It was an extraordinary moment of social reckoning. It’s no longer OK to say that this was transactional, that these women knew exactly what they were getting. It’s no longer acceptable to blame women for the fact that they were targeted by a sexual predator. This was a true repudiation of the arguments that Donna Rotunno, his lawyer, made, that these women used Weinstein and that he was an unwitting victim.

Approved with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.