

Harvey Weinstein and Hollywood's Hypocrisy

My purpose here is not to throw more stones on the now-disgraced Harvey Weinstein, who is already suffering the consequences of his alleged actions. My purpose is to confront the larger hypocrisy of Hollywood, an industry that has made billions of dollars selling sex, an industry that encourages all kinds of exploitation.

Let's put aside the question of whether media giants like NBC initially rejected the Weinstein exposé or whether actors like Matt Damon and Ben Affleck were insincere in their statements against him.

Instead, let's remember that, for years now, we've heard about the "casting couch," slang for sexual favors aspiring actresses would be expected to show Hollywood execs if they wanted to advance in the industry.

Just look at these headlines, with their dates:

May 31, 2011: "Casting Couch Nightmares: What Does It Take to Make It in Hollywood?"

April 23, 2014: "The Dark Side of Hollywood—10 Casting Couch Horror Stories; RadarOnline looks back at the stars who complained of harassment within industry"

June 20, 2014: "12 Celebrities Reveal Their 'Casting Couch' Stories"

And then this one, from Oct. 11, 2017, following the revelations about Weinstein: "Women of Hollywood Tell Their Casting Couch Horror Stories."

One recent article claims that these sexual abuses in the movie industry date back to the early 1920s. Yes, an AP

article published in the *Japan Times* claims that, "Hollywood's 'casting couch' scandals go back at least to 1921."

The article begins with this: "For anyone thinking the days of the so-called casting couch were long gone, this past week has been eye-opening. The growing list of women directing allegations at Harvey Weinstein suggests they never left Hollywood."

The point is that the major players in Hollywood have known about these kinds of things for years, yet most looked the other way. Why? It's part of the business, and you don't dare challenge or expose the giants. It will destroy your own career if you do!

Not only so, but many have played the game themselves. To point a finger at others is to point four fingers back at themselves. This has been self-evident to me as a complete outsider who has followed this from a great distance. What do the insiders know?

But it gets worse.

Corey Feldman, who became famous as a child actor, has been shouting out for years now that "Pedophilia is Hollywood's biggest problem."

A 2016 article in the *Daily Mail* starts with these bulleted points:

- Former child star Corey Feldman said that he was molested repeatedly by men who would pass him and other minors around
- He said that when he was 15 he was being abused by a man who was actually employed by his own father at the management company he ran
- Reveals that Corey Haim was raped when he was just 11 years old
- Feldman says the abuse he and Haim suffered was widely

known

- Haim would struggle with drugs up until his death in 2010 at the age of 38

When asked why he wouldn't name names, he said, "unfortunately California conveniently enough has a statute of limitations that prevents that from happening. Because if I were to go and mention anybody's name, I would be the one that would be in legal problems, and I'm the one that would be sued. We should be talking to the district attorneys and the lawmakers in California, especially because this is where the entertainment industry is, and this is a place where adults have more direct and inappropriate connection with children than probably anywhere else in the world."

I won't list the names of major Hollywood execs who have been accused of abusing underage boys in recent years, since these remain allegations at this point. But if Feldman (and others) are to be believed, these abusive practices are still rampant in Hollywood—the same Hollywood that is now condemning Harvey Weinstein with such righteous indignation. Shame on them for their hypocrisy.

But there's more. Hollywood knows quite well that sex sells, as these representative quotes make clear.

- **Guinevere Turner (co-screenwriter and actress – *American Psycho*):** People want to see R-rated movies, adults and children alike, and an easy way to get an R-rating is to have sex scenes or nudity. We'd be fooling ourselves if we didn't think teenagers wanted to see sex. And in creating the taboo, we create frenzy around it.
- **Papsidera:** Look at what just happened with Jessica Biel. She was in *Ulee's Gold*, and she was fabulous, but, you know, very few people saw that film, and *Seventh Heaven*, her TV show, is so sweet and syrupy, she really passed under the radar for a lot of years. So she did the cover of *Gear* magazine semi-naked. It was an attention-getting

moment, and it catapulted her career.

- **Glenn Rigberg (manager – Rigberg, Roberts & Rugolo):** What's so interesting is when you wander around the agencies and sets in Hollywood right now, there's this special magazine insert called the Maxim 100, which is pictures of scantily clad models and actresses. And ... it's being used in Hollywood to help cast movies.

Is anyone surprised to read this?

But, once again, it's easy to point fingers at others. Perhaps the bigger question to ask is this: How many of us who shake our heads in disgust at Harvey Weinstein actually enjoy the exploitation of the movie industry?

Hollywood, to its lasting shame, is definitely selling sex (and abusing people in the process). The question is: Are we buying it?