

**Published: 27 October 2017**

**Country: USA**



Ever since The New York Times [published a report](#) detailing Weinstein's abusive behavior over the past few decades, the story has snowballed into a massive Hollywood scandal [. Countless actresses have come forward](#) accusing Weinstein of sexual assault and in response, The Weinstein Company has fired Harvey Weinstein. The case had opened up discussions about sexual harassment in Hollywood and entertainment industries. The media have given a voice to victims However, there is one detail that cannot be ignored.

The Weinstein case was not news to a lot of people. In fact, many people were aware of his behavior for a long time. So why did it take so long for the story to reach the public? How was the story buried for so long in the age of Internet and social media? Does this case prove how much professional and trusted mainstream outlets such as the New York Times are needed?

Numerous media agencies and Hollywood celebrities have come forward to say that they have known about the Weinstein case for years. Kim Masters, who works for The Hollywood Reporter, [has admitted](#) that she has been trying to break the Weinstein story for years, and has known about his behavior towards women for almost 20 years. Hollywood stars Quentin Tarantino, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt have also [all confessed](#) that they were aware of Weinstein's predatory behavior towards women.

[NBC had the Weinstein story](#)

in their hands for months without publishing it, forcing the author to eventually turn to The New York Times to have it published. It is clear that people knew about Weinstein for years; his inappropriate sexual behavior was no secret. So we have to ask why it took so long for this story to finally be told.



Jim Rutenberg, a reporter for The New York Times, [recently wrote](#) that the reason Weinstein and his behavior went unreported for so long is because of his immense power: "The real story didn't surface until now because too many people in the intertwined news and entertainment industries had too much to gain from Mr. Weinstein for too long". Quite simply, Weinstein was a powerful man, so powerful that for a long time he was invincible.

Unfortunately, we have seen the media being silent before. Famous photographer Terry Richardson has been publicly accused of sexual abuse by various models since 2001. However, his case has never properly reached the spotlight, at least not until the Weinstein story broke. Conde Nast International, the publishing house in charge of big titles such as Vogue and Vanity Fair, has only [recently announced](#) that it will no longer be working with Terry Richardson. It is hard to believe that they were not aware of the allegations against Richardson before this; however, it seems that only with the pressure of the Weinstein case did they see

the need to drop him. This has to make one wonder how many more cases of ongoing sexual abuse are going on in various industries that people are aware of but too afraid to talk about.

The reason why it took so long for the Weinstein story to break cannot be put down to one industry. It is not just the media, or Hollywood or society in general. It is an overall lack of conversation around sexual harassment and abuse. It comes from a general acceptance amongst women that these things happen, that sexual harassment has become an unfortunate thing that we have to deal with. We only have to look at the [#MeToo hashtag](#), which evolved on Twitter soon after the Weinstein case came to light, to see just how common sexual harassment and abuse is amongst women.

When it comes to the media, reporting on big sexual abuse cases such as the Weinstein case can be tough. There are many ethical considerations to be kept in mind. A reporter might know that sexual abuse is occurring but a victim might not want to come forward and publicly disclose it. Victims always have to be put first; if they don't want to talk about it, then they must never be forced. However, as we can see from the Terry Richardson case, there are also many times that victims do want to share their story, but the media choose not to give them a platform to do so. But what could be a legacy of the New York Times investigation is the "Weinstein effect" in newsrooms in the USA and beyond.

For instance, CNN's Oliver Darcy reported that [five women had accused veteran political journalist Mark Halperin](#) of sexual harassment when he was in a powerful position at ABC News. Soon that Halperin apologized and MSNBC [announced](#) that he will be leaving his role as a contributor to the network.

It's too early to say whether a sea change has come in how the media and other industries address sexual harassment and assault in the workplace, report the [Columbia Journalism Review](#) (CJR). "But in the weeks since Weinstein, it feels like something has shifted in the culture. As more women come forward to share their stories, industries are reckoning with a problem too long ignored, and journalism is no exception".