

# OPERA America

## ROUNDTABLE: CONFRONTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT, ABUSE AND ASSAULT

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Person of the Year

TIME



ME TOO



Opinion

Harvey Weinstein Is My Monster Too

By SALMA HAYEK Dec. 12, 2017



# Sexual assault

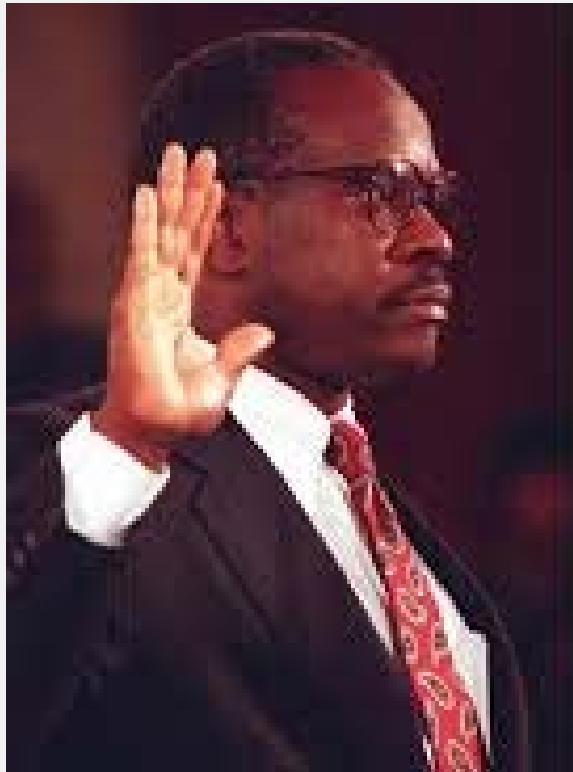
*Sexual assault: unwanted,  
nonconsensual sexual contact*

# Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment:

- offensive remarks about a person's sex and/OR
- unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature
  - Quid pro quo: requiring sex as a condition of promotion, access, etc.
  - Hostile environment: severe behavior or pattern of conduct
- can come from "superior," co-worker, or third party
  - (board member, volunteer)
- sex/gender and sexual orientation does not matter

\*U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission





# Power

*Power:*

- Economic, cultural, or social capital that enables someone to compel others to do things they do not want to do
- Explicit or implicit
- Being able to rely on institutions to protect you and take your side over the side of a victim
- Having power does not = being a “bad person”



*Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina  
Jolie and Others Say  
Weinstein Harassed Them*



# Consent

## *Consent*

- Agreeing to sexual activity with another person/people
- Freely given and not coerced
- Words or conduct
- Person must not be incapacitated
- Affirmative consent

# Micro-aggressions

## *Micro-aggressions:*

- questions, insults, or acts
- that are often unintentional
- individually are “not a big deal”
- are cumulative over time in their emotional and psychological toll
- can spark a reaction that appears out of proportion
- Examples???

# Why is sexual harassment bad???

- Legal Liability
- "The Business Case"
  - Organizational costs and disruptions



- "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" - a film that was delayed from production due to sexual harassment allegations

- C-SPAN Boston Museum Closes  
F- Nicholas Nixon  
Photography Show Early



# Et tu, opera?

- Freedom to think and create
- Breaking from social constraints
- Camaraderie
- Work hard/play hard culture
- Consent gets complicated

# Archetypes

- The Repertoire
- Action, Stage Left, or Directing Intimacy
- Getting Naked
- Essential Camaraderie
- The 1099 Problem
- The Boarding House
- The Star and the Vulnerable
- The Donor and the Vulnerable
- On the Road
- The Showmance

# Why is this so hard???

- “Command and control” models don’t work in creative cultures
- Mandatory training can be counter-productive
- No one wants to police behavior
- Activates bias and “rebellion”
- Creates culture of resistance
- Volunteer culture
- Resource constraints

# What to Do???

- Contractual approaches
  - Condition of employment
  - Love Contracts
- Title IX “officers” or coordinators
- Training

# Emerging Disruptions

- Multiple points of reporting
- Peer-led “training”
- Bystander intervention
- Creating new cultures



# Roundtable Discussion

# Case Study

You joined a new opera company last year. For the company's next festival season they are proud to have recruited one of the leading directors in the country, Pat. While extraordinarily talented, Pat has a long-standing reputation as a serial sexual harasser. In the last several years two young artists have accused Pat of sexual harassment. In addition, although married, several years ago Pat had sexual relationships with two different singers in the same production. Although these relationships were, by all accounts, consensual, they still generated significant tensions within that company. Pat dismisses the concerns as overreactions to what Pat dismisses as an overly flirtatious nature. One of the artists your company has recruited calls to express concerns and ask what steps the company is taking to ensure a professional season. You also note concern among the members of your young artists program—some young artists are anxious about the atmosphere that Pat might create. Others, though, are excited about the opportunity to work with Pat and believe that the “#MeToo” concerns are overblown and unrealistic, given the culture of opera companies. The company's executive director calls a meeting of trusted members of the company. Assigning roles to each person at your table, how might you approach this situation if you were the:

- The executive director of the company;
- A human resources professional in the company;
- A member of the young artist program;
- The company's artistic director;
- A member of the company's marketing team;
- A member of the costume or set design teams;
- A development professional;
- A board member.

# Questions and Discussion



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