

Sexual Harassment and Absolution of Sin in 21st-Century America

The *New York Times* published [a damning report](#) that contained decades of sexual harassment claims against Harvey Weinstein, one of the most powerful and celebrated film producers in Hollywood.

The details in the report are, frankly, nauseating and pathetic. According to the *Times*, Weinstein routinely invited female employees to his hotel room, where he would make unusual and inappropriate advances.

“Women reported to a hotel for what they thought were work reasons, only to discover that Mr. Weinstein, who has been married for most of three decades, sometimes seemed to have different interests.

Working for Mr. Weinstein could mean getting him out of bed in the morning and doing “turndown duty” late at night, preparing him for sleep. Like the colleague cited in Ms. O’Connor’s memo, some junior employees required to perform those tasks said they were disturbing.

In interviews, eight women described varying behavior by Mr. Weinstein: appearing nearly or fully naked in front of them, requiring them to be present while he bathed or repeatedly asking for a massage or initiating one himself. The women, typically in their early or mid-20s and hoping to get a toehold in the film industry, said he could switch course quickly – meetings and clipboards one moment, intimate comments the next.”

When accusations of impropriety and harassment arose, women

often received payouts—usually between \$80,000 and \$150,000, the *Times* reports—for their silence. Among those who reportedly received payouts was actress Rose McGowan, who received \$100,000 shortly after shooting the hit movie *Scream*.

This private behavior runs counter to the face Weinstein portrays to the world, the *Times* says. “In public, he presents himself as a liberal lion, a champion of women and a winner of not just artistic but humanitarian awards.”

Weinstein’s response to the dark allegations is a familiar one, at least to those steeped in the Catholic tradition.

1. [Confession](#)

Weinstein began by confessing his sins.

“I realized some time ago that [sic] needed to be a better person, and my interactions with the people I work with have changed,” he said in a statement, [according to](#) the *Wrap*. “I appreciate the way I’ve behaved with colleagues in the past has caused a lot of pain, and I sincerely apologize for it. Though I’m trying to do better, I know I have a long way to go. That is my commitment. My journey now will be to learn about myself and conquer my demons.”

2. [Penance](#)

Weinstein is taking a leave of absence from his company. He promised to return only after he has conquered his “demons.”

“I want a second chance in the community, but I know I’ve got work to do to earn it. I have goals that are now priorities. Trust me, this isn’t an overnight process. I’ve been trying to do this for 10 years, and this is a wake-up call.”

3. [Indulgence](#)

[According to](#) the *Hollywood Reporter*, Weinstein announced he would sue the *New York Times* and that “proceeds from the case

will be donated to women's organizations.”

He also announced that he was organizing a \$5 million foundation that would grant scholarships to women directors. “While this might seem coincidental, it has been in the works for a year,” he said.

There's no telling at this point if Weinstein will be absolved for his (alleged) bad behavior. But he certainly appears to be on the right track. Five million bucks can grant a lot of forgiveness.

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Image Credit: [Zimbio](#)