The Psychology of Harvey Weinstein

By Alex Berezow — October 11, 2017

The troubles keep piling up for disgraced film producer Harvey Weinstein. Actresses Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie are the latest to report being victimized by a man who appears to be a long-time, serial sexual harasser.

According to evolutionary psychologists, male psychology is not particularly complicated. Men want sex, and some will do just about anything to get it. As Ross Pomeroy wrote for RealClearScience, if given the opportunity, about 75% of college-aged men would have sex with a complete stranger. It shouldn't be a surprise that when in a position of power, some men choose to use that influence to get sex. Victims often "go along" or keep quiet out of fear of retaliation. This social dynamic has worked for years without serious consequences for the perpetrators, which is probably why they still do it.

The question, therefore, isn't, "How did Weinstein think he could get away with this?" but, "How did Weinstein think he could get away with this in Hollywood?"

Along with places like New York City and San Francisco, Hollywood bills itself as a center of diversity, tolerance, and equality. Obviously, the film industry gives it an enormous cultural megaphone, and Hollywood has not shied away from using it. The silver screens and televisions of the world are filled with what Hollywood declares right or wrong.

Yet it's now apparent that two ideals of Hollywood culture -- sexual liberty and feminism -- are at odds with each other.

Sexual liberty encourages men and women to engage in consequence-free sex with whomever they want, whenever they want, while feminism posits a woman's right to self-determination and to say, "No!" to those who would exploit them. They are not mutually exclusive, except in places like
Hollywood, where a "do as I say, not as I do" approach to feminism reigns supreme.

This problem isn't unique to Hollywood. A study \[3\] published in the journal *Gender, Work & Organization* found that Dutch women in the creative industries (such as dancers, artists, musicians, actresses, models, and designers) were regularly subjected to sexual harassment. In fact, it concluded that "many women considered it to be part of their occupational culture and career advancement."

This means that two distinct cultures in two parts of the globe share a common cancer: Women, and likely men, are routinely sexually harassed. If that's true in supposedly enlightened places like the Netherlands and Hollywood, it's probably true nearly everywhere.

Well, maybe not quite everywhere. To find hotbeds of sexual harassment, we probably should look in those places that have a high proportion of extremely wealthy and powerful people who say all the right things and hobnob with all the influential people, ostentatiously throwing money at politically correct causes. In reality, some of these people are living lives that are at complete odds with what they preach in public. When they feel untouchable, some then use that power to exploit those they claim to care about.

Feminists may want to think again about the sort of people they have chosen as political allies.

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