

# SUMMARY SHE SAID

JODI KANTOR & MEGAN TWOHEY



# **Summary of “She Said” by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey**

Written by Lea Schullery

Discover the story of how two investigative journalists uncovered and exposed the Hollywood secret that inspired the #MeToo movement.

Introduction	5
The First Phone Call	6
Hollywood Secrets	8
How to Silence a Victim	10
Positive Reputation Management	12
A Company's Complicity	14
"Who Else is on the Record?"	16
"There Will Be a Movement"	17
The Beachside Dilemma	19
Can't Guarantee I'll Go to DC	21
Final Summary	22

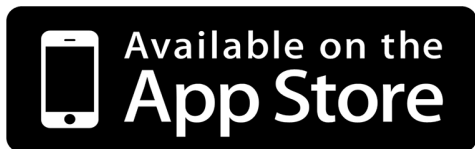


# QuickRead

F R E E B O O K S U M M A R I E S

**Go to [QuickRead.com/App](https://QuickRead.com/App) now to download our app and get access to thousands of free book summaries as both text and audiobooks.**

**Get the key insights of non-fiction books in minutes instead of hours. Listen to our free audiobooks while you workout or on your commute to work.**



# Introduction

In 2017, women began to hold more power than ever before. Women held jobs once held almost exclusively by men, they led nations including Germany and the United Kingdom, they were CEOs of companies such as General Motors and PepsiCo. In just one year of work, a thirtysomething-year-old woman could make more money than all her female ancestors had made in their combined lifetimes. Still, women were sexually harassed. Those who spoke out were dismissed or denigrated. Victims hid away and were offered money as reparation, in exchange for silence. The perpetrators, however, rose to new levels of success and were often praised and cheered for being a “bad boy.” But after a breaking news story of Weinstein’s alleged sexual harassment on October 5, 2017, the world watched with astonishment as millions of women told their own stories of mistreatment. Suddenly men were being held accountable for their actions and the #MeToo movement began.

Sparked by the investigative journalism of Jodi Kanter and Megan Twohey and spurred on by activists and brave women who chose to come forward, the #MeToo movement has forced the public to talk about uncomfortable but important topics surrounding sexual harassment, abuse, gender discrimination, and consent. In *She Said*, Kanter and Twohey discuss the trials and tribulations they faced when investigating a Hollywood secret that sparked one of the most popular movements in history.

# The First Phone Call

Harvey Weinstein. A name that is synonymous with power. As a famous Hollywood producer, Weinstein has been known to propel young actors to stardom including Gwyneth Paltrow, Matt Damon, Michelle Williams, and Jennifer Lawrence. He's earned arm-fulls of Oscar trophies including five Best Picture wins and was simply known by the name of "Harvey," no last name needed. Working with Weinstein could bring success unlike any other. Despite his reputation and power, rumors had long been circulating about his treatment of women.

Jodi Kantor had been working as a New York Times investigative journalist for 14 years, working specifically on stories of sexual harassment and abuse. Many of her stories sparked changes in policies at companies like Starbucks, Amazon, and Harvard Business School. If anyone was going to uncover a Hollywood secret of sexual abuse, Kantor was the woman for the job. She started her investigation with Rose McGowan, who was well-known for her outspokenness on social media and her accusations against sexual misconduct in the entertainment business. She once even tweeted a personal story about her rape at the hands of "a Hollywood producer," who remained anonymous.

Reluctantly, McGowan agreed to speak to Kantor off the record. Her testimony was both shocking and heartbreaking, she told Kantor about her encounter with Weinstein two decades prior. According to McGowan, she met Weinstein in 1997 at the Sundance Film Festival, where he invited her to his hotel room for a meeting to "talk business." Once in the room, Weinstein forced himself upon her without her consent, she became frightened and went along with his actions so she could safely escape. Days later, Weinstein reached out to McGowan about a special arrangement. She became disgusted and hired a lawyer who extracted a \$100,000 settlement from Weinstein, which she donated to a rape crisis center.

Kantor knew she needed to dig deeper to avoid a “he said, she said” situation, so she enlisted the help of Megan Twohey. Twohey was an investigative journalist known for making waves with stories about sexual abuse allegations against Donald Trump during his 2016 presidential campaign. Kantor called Twohey and the women constructed a strategy of approach, and when Twohey returned from maternity leave, they joined forces.

# Hollywood Secrets

Kantor and Twohey knew that to corroborate Rose McGowan's story, they needed to find women who shared similar experiences with Weinstein but breaking into Hollywood proved to be tricky. First, the women needed to get in touch with actresses who had worked with Weinstein, but many of these contacts led to dead ends. Many even suggested that Weinstein's behavior was hardly newsworthy, just normal business that occurs in Hollywood.

Kantor slowly contacted some big names in Hollywood, including Marisa Tomei, Daryl Hannah, and Ashley Judd. And while the two former were eager to speak out against the abuse they've seen in the industry, they were still anxious about possible repercussions. Her interview with Ashley Judd, however, resulted in a flood of information. Judd first met Weinstein back in 1996 when she was in her late twenties and on her rise to stardom. Like McGowan, Judd was invited for a hotel meeting in the producer's suite.

While Judd initially refused a meeting, she eventually agreed due to Weinstein's persistence. When she arrived, the producer answered the door wearing only a robe. He offered to rub her shoulders and even requested that she watch him take a shower. Feeling trapped, she managed to come up with a few crude jokes that allowed her to escape the meeting quickly. It wasn't until Judd studied gender violence at the University of Kentucky that she finally agreed to become more publicly involved in speaking out against sexual abuse. Unfortunately, the abuse from Weinstein didn't stop there.

Kantor then contacted Lena Dunham and Jenni Konner, producer partners in the television show *Girls*. The two women became involved by sending Kantor contact numbers, ideas for interviewees, and leads on the Weinstein case. One of those was Weinstein's top star, Gwyneth Paltrow, who shared similar stories as Judd and McGowan. He would promise her roles and then try to solicit sexual favors from her in hotel rooms where she, like the



others, felt vulnerable and trapped. Like many others, Paltrow wanted to help but feared speaking out and becoming the focus of the story. None felt safe enough to go on-the-record because of Weinstein's obvious power, so Kantor and Twohey needed even more than testimony to move forward.

# How to Silence a Victim

Around July 2017, Fox and Bill O'Reilly were being investigated for sexual harassment and abuse, which uncovered a critical factor in exposing perpetrators: the settlements. The two journalists quickly realized the extent of settlement agreements that many victims are forced to sign around the country. Offering money for silence, victims are coerced into signing settlements to keep quiet, even barring victims from speaking to other victims. Kantor and Twohey had their suspicions that Weinstein's victims were forced to sign such contracts, and those suspicions were confirmed when a woman named Zelda Perkins agreed to speak.

Perkins began working at Miramax in the mid-90s at the young age of 22. "Perkins never succumbed to Weinstein's come-ons. She was small but tough and she had come to the job prepared. Another female colleague had instructed her to sit in armchairs, not sofas, in his presence, so he couldn't sidle up easily, and to wear her winter parka for protection even if she was warm." Of course, Perkins was bound by a settlement and was unable to speak about her experience working for Weinstein.

Both Perkins and her colleague, Rowena Chiu, experienced particularly aggressive advances from Weinstein at the Venice Film Festival. Describing it as "everything short of rape," the two girls hired a lawyer from London and filed complaints. Soon, however, they were told they would have to settle and never enter a courtroom. With no physical evidence and no calls to the Venice police, they were coerced by Miramax's powerful legal team to take a settlement and sign a strict non-disclosure agreement.

While Perkins was willing to break her contract, Kantor still had one more contact, one of her most important contacts. Laura Madden, and the best part? She wasn't bound by any settlement. Madden, like so many victims before her, went to Weinstein's hotel room expecting a business meeting. And like others, Madden experienced offers of massages, sexual requests, masturbating, and shower requests. Experiencing everything short of rape,

Madden felt trapped, vulnerable, and helpless. Madden knew she had to speak out because she, perhaps, was the only victim not bound to silence by a non-disclosure agreement.

# Positive Reputation Management

If you have money and power like Weinstein, you can go through incredible lengths to keep controversies under wraps, and Weinstein planned to use his power to do just that. The executive editor of the Times, Dean Baquet, warned Kantor and Twohey to proceed with caution. They should expect to be followed and approached by decoys hired by Weinstein's team who aim to gain their trust for information. Of course, Baquet was correct in assuming this information.

Shortly afterwards, Lanny Davis contacted the reporters wanting to talk to Kantor and Twohey off-the-record about Weinstein. Davis was a high-powered attorney closely associated with the Clintons, and the two journalists were curious as to how he was involved with Weinstein. They set aside their skepticism and agreed to meet with him alongside their editor, Rebecca Corbett. During the meeting, Davis chatted about Weinstein and offered them to interview the Hollywood producer to demonstrate the changes he's made in his stance toward women and consent.

The women then turned the conversation to Rose McGowan, which led Davis to reveal some critical information. Davis confirmed that Weinstein had settled with McGowan, thus corroborating her story. Additionally, he told the reporters that Weinstein was aware of the investigation but he didn't plan to interfere. Of course, this claim was a blatant lie. Weinstein planned to silence the girls through any means possible.

Weinstein first enlisted the help of David Boies, who was bound to Weinstein through entanglements that kept Boies loyal to the producer. Boies had published a memoir through Miramax Books and his daughter, Regency's, acting career took off through Miramax films. In July 2017, Boies advised Weinstein to hire Black Cube, an Israeli company that aims to derail investigations with the expertise of former Israeli intelligence agents. One particular agent, known as "Anna," had already manipulated Rose McGowan by befriending her to steal information about her

unpublished memoir. Now, the agents would be tasked with stopping Kantor and Twohey. Anna attempted the same tactic with Kantor, posing as a corporate feminist, but Kantor was too busy to initiate a friendship.

Additionally, the two reporters learned about Weinstein's powerful lawyer on his team, Lisa Bloom. Retained in December 2016 by Weinstein, Bloom's job in helping the producer included an extensive list including advice on how to deal with Rose McGowan and finding out what she wanted for silence; proposing articles to discredit McGowan on Google search results; offering to write a cease and desist letter to McGowan; initiating a pre-emptive public interview for Weinstein to demonstrate his change of heart and transformed attitude, making him the "hero of the story;" urging him to start a foundation or network that put women ahead of men in the industry or associate himself publicly with gender equality groups; and lastly, positive reputation management to improve the first-page search results on Google.

# A Company's Complicity

By September 2017, Kantor and Twohey had gathered many witness statements and corroborated many stories; however, they still didn't have enough to move forward. Without concrete evidence and public confirmation, their investigation would be useless and quickly disputed as libel. For the team to move forward, the team recognized the importance of finding information from Weinstein's business partners.

The Weinstein Company's executive vice president for accounting and financial reporting, Irwin Reiter, joined the company in 1989 at the age of thirty. Throughout his time with the company, Reiter heard reports of sexual harassment from young women. In 2014, however, reports escalated and Reiter confronted Weinstein about his behavior, worried that it would have severe financial consequences for the company.

Meeting late at night at a restaurant in Tribeca, Reiter was very careful about the information that he shared with Kantor and was most concerned about Weinstein's recent behavior that put the company at risk. Reiter, however, proved to be critical in opening ties to the many young women who were abused by Weinstein during their time at the company. One story, in particular, was that of Sandeep Rehal, Weinstein's personal assistant who had been required to perform many unpleasant tasks including sourcing and providing his erectile dysfunction medication and sweeping his hotel rooms clear of evidence afterward.

On September 19, 2017, Twohey met with Weinstein to discuss a fundraiser that the producer held in 2015 for an AIDS charity. After raising \$600,000, Weinstein used the funds to pay his investors for the *Finding Neverland* production versus giving the money to charity recipients. Later that month, Kantor and Twohey published the story and set the motion proving that Weinstein could not be trusted.

The two journalists were gaining traction against Weinstein, and they set up an interview with the producer's brother, Bob Weinstein. While the two once had a close relationship, The Weinstein Company eventually took a toll on their relationship. In 2015, Bob addressed his brother's behavior in a letter demanding that Harvey commit to treatment for sex addiction. He begged his brother to change, citing that "You have brought shame to the family and your company through your misbehavior." However, nothing changed.

## **“Who Else is on the Record?”**

After finally writing their article, the two journalists shared ten credible stories of misconduct against Weinstein dating from 1990 to 2015. Additionally, not only did they have an on-the-record interview with Laura Madden, but they also had a memo written by Lauren O'Connor, a former junior executive, which detailed the many instances of Weinstein's abuse and cover-ups.

On October 3, 2017, Kantor and Twohey were ready for their conference call with Weinstein to present him with their article and allow him a chance to comment and refute the allegations. When the two detailed the allegations and listed the details, Weinstein was outraged and repeatedly demanded information about their sources. Corbett gave Weinstein 48 hours to respond, forcing *The Times* to wait and see if Weinstein would leak the story to another news outlet.

Shortly after the conference call, Kantor received a phone call. Not just any phone call, but an important one. You see, even with the many witnesses and victims of abuse, none of those involved had agreed to go on record except for Madden. However, even Madden was beginning to rethink her decision, she was scheduled for breast cancer surgery around the same time the story would break, and she would need support from others to get her through the surgery and backlash from Weinstein. The phone call was from Ashley Judd. She was willing to go on-the-record and share her awful hotel room encounter with Weinstein, an encounter which would now become the opening headline for their story.



## “There Will Be a Movement”

The following day, Kantor and Twohey informed Weinstein that Judd would be a part of the story and pressed him for an official response. Weinstein was furious and accused the reporters of lying when they said that Gwyneth Paltrow was not part of the article. Finally, later that day, the journalists received an email containing an 18-page stream of verbal abuse written by Harder, one of Weinstein’s attorneys.

Throughout the document, the lawyer denied all the allegations and called Weinstein’s accusers liars. He also attacked *The Times*, accusing them of abandoning their journalistic standards by giving Weinstein and his team such little time to respond. He then ended the document with a threat to sue the paper for millions of dollars in damages. Legal experts at *The Times*, however, ensured the journalists that the document was baseless and Harder’s threats would never stand up in court. However, they pushed back the deadline for the article, telling Weinstein they would run the story at 1 p.m. the following day whether he gave a response or not.

While *The Times* waited for an official response from Weinstein, the producer leaked the story to other publications including the *Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety*. While the journalists were initially annoyed, they soon learned how valuable the leak would be to their cause. Soon after, they began receiving calls and messages from other women wanting to talk about their own experiences with Weinstein. Ecstatic over their last-minute developments, the journalists received newly corroborated facts and more people willing to go on-the-record after seeing the *Hollywood Reporter* leak.

Finally, Weinstein sent his official statement that was largely unimpressive; however, he did announce that he would be taking a leave of absence from the company. At 2:05 p.m., Baquet published the article online with the headline, “Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades.” Within hours, the story went viral and *The Times* became flooded

with stories from women wanting to share their own stories. Dozens of former employees and actresses including Rosanna Arquette, Angelina Jolie and Gwyneth Paltrow all came forward wanting to go on-the-record.

The Weinstein Company, however, was scrambling. They quickly held emergency meetings while Weinstein and his team tried to carry out some damage control. Board Members quickly resigned despite Weinstein's efforts to express remorse and change in behavior. The company knew how serious the allegations were, his own brother told him, "You are finished, Harvey."

# The Beachside Dilemma

In the aftermath of the initial article, new women continued to come forward with their own stories of sexual assault at the hands of the Hollywood producer. A name that was once synonymous with power now became synonymous with sexual assault as Harvey Weinstein was criminally charged with rape and other sexual acts. He lost his job and reputation, but something new was beginning.

The story began a national conversation about sexual harassment and the #MeToo movement, coined by civil rights activist Tarana Burke, opened the dialogue for women to share their experiences. Celebrities, in particular, were calling out their abusers, including comedian Louis C.K., Senator Al Franken, and chef Mario Batali. While the movement was sparking change, a new debate emerged as people questioned: “how far is too far?” Society largely couldn’t agree on what constituted sexual harassment, and Kantor and Twohey waited for the right story that might bring a sense of structure.

In early August, Kantor received a phone call from an attorney requesting to investigate a Supreme Court nominee under allegations of sexual assault. The attorney, Debra Katz, had a new client, a psychology professor named Christine Blasey Ford, who alleged that she was assaulted at a party in 1982 by two boys. One of those boys was Brett Kavanaugh, a high-ranking judge, and President Trump’s Supreme Court nominee. The impact on Ford following the assault caused her to experience decades of anxiety treated through therapy and marriage counseling.

Ford didn’t initially want to come forward, but upon hearing that he may be appointed to the Supreme Court, she knew she needed to speak out. That summer, Ford would go on to write a detailed letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein, the senior Democrat on the Judiciary Committee. However, Ford’s case proved to be difficult to prove without key witnesses and without any other victims coming forward, instead, it was a “he said, she said” case that many victims find themselves in. While she had a passing

polygraph test and therapy notes that described the incident, lawyers were still unsure how the case would be received in court. But on September 4, Ford ended up contacting Feinstein to withdraw her testimony.

## Can't Guarantee I'll Go to DC

Despite the withdrawal of her testimony, a media storm had already spread about possible allegations against Kavanaugh. Eventually, the *Washington Post* revealed Ford's identity and forced her into the spotlight. Now the public questioned whether Ford would go on to testify or not. The hearings would begin on September 27, so she needed to make a decision soon. Ford, however, was already receiving death threats in the aftermath of President Trump's tweets mocking her story. Additionally, she had a fear of flying, so making a trip to DC would prove to be even more terrifying in the face of public scrutiny.

Finally, Ford decided to take the stand. In a small room on Capitol Hill, the nation watched as Ford gave her testimony. She read a detailed statement outlining her traumatizing experience with Kavanaugh. Her testimony was followed by hours of questioning as people tried to pick apart her story and prove her an unreliable witness and a liar. However, Ford maintained calm, poised, and polite throughout the entire proceeding. Kavanaugh, however, took the stand in a fury, claiming himself a victim and target of libelous accusations aimed at ruining his reputation.

In the end, Kavanaugh was appointed to the Supreme Court despite Ford's powerful testimony. People questioned if this meant the #MeToo movement had failed. Afterward, however, Ford would go on to say that, "She assumed Kavanaugh would be confirmed, as she always had. Her victory had been telling her story to the world with dignity." Despite the confirmation of Kavanaugh, the #MeToo movement has been an overall success. Victims of abuse continue to speak out against sexual misconduct and perpetrators are becoming held accountable for their actions.

## Final Summary

Speaking out about sexual abuse is hard, especially when the abuser is a powerful Hollywood producer. The task of uncovering the secrets of Harvey Weinstein's sexual misconduct proved to be difficult with victims sworn to secrecy, as well as daunting with three decades of testimony to investigate and pore over. Kantor and Twohey, however, were the two investigators perfect for the job. With their hard work, determination, and skills in investigative journalism, they were successful in exposing one of the biggest Hollywood secrets. Simply getting witness testimonies would not be enough; instead, the journalists understood they would need concrete evidence and corroboration of stories for society to take action. When the time came to publish the article, Kantor and Twohey didn't expect the response they received. Women were coming forward at a rapid rate to share their own experiences and the article sparked a #MeToo movement which gave women a platform to share their stories of sexual abuse and harassment.



# QuickRead

F R E E B O O K S U M M A R I E S

**Go to [QuickRead.com/App](https://QuickRead.com/App) now to download our app and get access to thousands of free book summaries as both text and audiobooks.**

**Get the key insights of non-fiction books in minutes instead of hours. Listen to our free audiobooks while you workout or on your commute to work.**

