**Why did the number of stories of sexual harassment and abuse explode in October 2017?**

In 2017, stories of sexual assault in Hollywood at the hands of famed producer Harvey Weinstein began to leak, and on October 8th of that year, he was fired from The Weinstein Company, the company he’d help found. Evidence of him paying settlements to at least 8 women was the catalyst to his inevitable downfall. This event was what ultimately led to the #MeToo movement due to the sudden interest the media had in the story. Many people, mostly women, came now and had the confidence to come forward and tell their stories about these practices in Hollywood after big names like Ashley Judd came forward, mostly because the media propaganda was on their side at the time.

Judd came forward with her story in 2015, but she didn’t use Weinstein’s name until 2017 according to the textbook. If she’d said so sooner, people would likely be pushed back, and it could’ve hurt her career instead of empowering her. Around this time, as a society, we were much more open to social justice and speaking out against injustices. Consistent social movements were trending on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook such as “Black Lives Matter” which caught fire in 2016. So, this was the perfect time for the #MeToo movement to take off.

Another reason the number of stories about sexual assault skyrocketed is because of the message effects the printed stories had on the masses. The cognitive, attitudinal, behavioral, and psychological effects helped to open people up to the stories and share their own. Many people don’t share their truths out of embarrassment of being in that situation or fear of what may happen if they do tell. Before the surplus of stories, the media had a history of damning victims of sexual assault, often placing the blame solely on them. For example, the RnB singer R Kelly has had multiple allegations against him throughout his career. One of the biggest was his marriage to then-15-year-old singer Aaliyah when he was 27. Even to this day, people are still blaming Aaliyah for this, calling her and many of the underaged girls “fast” and “hot-skirted.” So the sudden freedom to tell their stories and be heard because of the articles being released aided in the sudden boom.

The media chose what side of these stories to be on, and at the time, the best side was to be on the side of the victims. Stories like that of Brock Turner v. The People where the courts were siding with the rapist instead of the victim in 2016 sparked outrage and by the time proof of Harvey Weinstein’s horrible actions came out this was the perfect media storm. The trends of the time fell in line with supporting the victims and that proved to be a profitable move for them. The more the media printed stories, the more stories people had to share.

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