

Harvey Weinstein found guilty of rape by Los Angeles court



Harvey Weinstein listens in court during a pre-trial hearing in Los Angeles, California, US, on July 29, 2021 [File: Etienne Laurent/Pool via Reuters]

Los Angeles, December 20 (RHC)-- Disgraced Hollywood movie producer Harvey Weinstein has been found guilty of rape and two counts of sexual assault against an Italian actress and model – known as Jane Doe 1 – by a jury in Los Angeles, California.

After a month-long trial and nine days of deliberations, the three guilty counts mark the second conviction of the onetime Hollywood kingmaker who became the notorious face of the #MeToo movement in the United States after a litany of sexual abuse allegations emerged five years ago. The jury on Monday also acquitted the 70-year-old or could not reach a verdict in the cases of the three other accusers.

Weinstein is already serving a 23-year prison sentence after being convicted of sex crimes by a court in New York City. "Harvey Weinstein forever destroyed a part of me that night in 2013 and I will never get that back," Jane Doe 1 said in a statement issued shortly after Monday's verdict.

"The criminal trial was brutal and Weinstein's lawyers put me through hell on the witness stand, but I knew I had to see this through to the end, and I did. I hope Weinstein never sees the outside of a prison cell during his lifetime," she said.

Weinstein faces up to 18 years in prison on the counts for which he was convicted, but aggravating factors could increase that to 24 years.

Prosecutors also called 40 other witnesses in an attempt to give context and corroboration to those stories.

Four were other women who were not part of the charges but testified that Weinstein raped or sexually assaulted them. They said he promised help with securing an audition or a book deal, then arranged meetings where staff disappeared and left them alone with him.

Weinstein said all of his sexual encounters were consensual and pleaded not guilty. Weinstein was first convicted of sexual misconduct in New York City in February 2020. He was extradited from New York City to a Los Angeles prison in July 2021.

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