

"This Is Going to Be a Mess": Media Mobilizes For the Harvey Weinstein Show

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"This f***ing blows," one news producer said as journalists lined up to attend Monday's kickoff court hearing in New York. "Two months of this shit."

The first journalists lined up at 4 a.m., some four hours before the doors of the New York County Supreme Court building opened Monday morning and five-and-a-half hours before Harvey Weinstein entered a courtroom for day one of his first criminal trial.

Temperatures in New York were in the mid-30s as the more than 150 journalists who have been credentialed to cover the trial waited for their chance to get inside. "This fucking blows," one veteran news producer in line said to another. "Two months of this shit."

As journalists waited to finally enter the courtroom, scores of potential jurors carrying red summons letters walked down the same hallway trying to figure out where to go. "Down the hall to your left," a court officer told them.

As expected, Weinstein entered the courtroom and traversed the aisle with the aid of a walker, which he leaned on before joining his legal team at the counsel's table. (In one gallery row, attorneys Gloria Allred and Douglas Wigdor sat next to each other, though the majority of the attendees were members of the press.)

Ahead of the start of the hearing, Weinstein's lead attorney, Donna Rotunno, chatted with her client, smiled and patted him on the back.

Weinstein gave off little emotion during the hearing, only piping up when the prosecution suggested that he be confined to New York state during the duration of the trial. Weinstein asked his attorneys about visiting Connecticut, where he lives, and Supreme Court Justice James M. Burke suggested that he would allow the former movie producer to travel home on weekends as long as there is nothing "non-monitorable about the request."

He consulted quietly with his attorneys as Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon made motions, at one point calling him a "predator" and drawing an objection. A court officer stood during behind Weinstein during the duration of the hearing, presumably for his safety.

Scheduled to coincide with the start of the trial, several prominent Weinstein accusers — including actresses Rosanna Arquette and Rose McGowan — counterprogrammed the hearing with a boisterous press conference held outside the courthouse.

Between the day's legal proceedings, defense team statements and the press conference, the first day of the Weinstein trial seemed to presage the media spectacle that will follow over the next two months of the trial.

"This is going to be a mess," one TV news veteran on-hand said.