

# I testified against Harvey Weinstein. No sentence can heal his victims, but it's a start

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Taralê Wulff

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On 29 January 2020, I testified as a Molineux witness at the Harvey Weinstein criminal trial. Weinstein will be sentenced Wednesday, and I intend to be present at his sentencing. As I was not one of the named victims in this trial, I am not permitted under the laws of New York to give a victim impact statement. It is important for me, however, that my voice is heard.

After I was raped by Weinstein in 2005, I was confused. Why didn't I scream? Why didn't I fight? I thought I was stronger and I hated myself for being weak. That self-hate turned into shame and guilt. Shame that I never should have felt and guilt that was not mine to own. I didn't know that at the time. I didn't realize it for 12 more years.

Harvey Weinstein stole a part of my self-worth, treating me like I was nothing and I became fearful and mistrustful, not only of others but of myself. These feelings were unbearable to live with and I pushed back the fear, shame and guilt to move on with my life. That is how I survive.

I was OK (or so I thought) until I read about brave women speaking out with stories just like mine. The heartbreak of shame and guilt came flooding back. I knew what those women felt and I wanted to help them. I *had* to.

It didn't occur to me for quite some time that I might actually start to heal from being sexually assaulted. My single intention was to help survivors hold Weinstein accountable for his disgusting crimes. As I embarked on my quest to help others, I was introduced to several incredible people that made me realize that I am also worth standing up for.

My first encounter with the Manhattan DA's office was with Martha Bashford. She was compassionate and the first person to point out that I was still affected by my experience and encouraged me to seek help. I am forever grateful to Joan Illuzzi-Orbon and Meghan Hast for continuing the pursuit of justice and for always believing in me. They are examples of the intelligent, fearless women that I look up to.

My lawyers at Wigdor LLP guided me legally and supported me personally over the last two years. To Douglas Wigdor, Jeanne Christensen and Lindsay Goldbrum, I am indebted to you for the countless hours you have given me. You've played a pivotal role in my life and I am unbelievably grateful that you didn't allow me to quit on myself.

I thank Ali Salwa of Mt Sinai's Savi (Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention) program and NYC's Family Justice Center. You have been both therapist and friend. Your patience, empathy, intelligence and strength are immeasurable. You've helped me to find a deeper love of myself and begin redefining my life.

Testifying was surreal. Mentally I was nervous and intimidated but in my heart I knew I had my truth and no matter what anyone said to me, I would go home with my truth. My overwhelming fear was that there was more at stake than me - I was there to help the other women who spoke out. What if my emotions got in the way and I couldn't speak? Or worse, I might not be able to remember everything under the pressure of intense questioning.

I appreciate the work of the jurors and their ultimately holding Harvey Weinstein responsible. I cannot appreciate what it would be like to pass sentence on another person, but I am confident that Judge Burke will do what is right and not give Weinstein any special treatment. My hope is that Judge Burke will hold Weinstein accountable by imposing a prison sentence that reflects what he has done to us and knowing that whatever sentence he renders, it will never undo what has happened. Those events will continue to haunt me and the other survivors for the rest of our lives.

I hope that the sentence sends a clear message that times have changed and that more women need to speak out for themselves and that men and women need to speak out for others. We need to show self-love and empathy to overcome centuries of illogical thinking that has normalized the sexual mistreatment of women. This is hopefully just the beginning. The conversation must continue.