

Julia Ormond Sues Harvey Weinstein For Battery, Names CAA And Disney Defendants

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Julia Ormond Sues Harvey Weinstein for Battery, CAA and Disney as Enablers of Sexual Assault (EXCLUSIVE)



Tierney Gearon

Julia Ormond, the English actress best known for her roles in '90s films such as “Legends of the Fall,” “First Knight” and “Smilla’s Sense of Snow,” is suing Harvey Weinstein for sexual battery.

Ormond is additionally suing CAA, The Walt Disney Company and Miramax. While Weinstein has been named as the defendant in numerous sexual assault lawsuits since exposes published in 2017 in The New York Times and New Yorker uncovered his alleged patterns misconduct toward dozens of women in the entertainment industry, it is rare for business partners that profited from Weinstein’s work to be named as defendants for supposedly enabling his behavior.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday morning in New York Supreme Court, obtained by *Variety*, Ormond claims that Weinstein sexually assaulted her in 1995 after a business dinner when he lured her into giving him a massage, climbed on top of her, masturbated and forced her to give him oral sex.

After the alleged assault, Ormond informed her agents, Bryan Lourd and Kevin Huvane, what had happened with Weinstein, according to the lawsuit, which states that the CAA agents cautioned her from speaking out and did not protect her. (Lourd and Huvane, who

today are co-chairmen of CAA, are not named as defendants, but are frequently mentioned throughout Ormond's suit as her representatives at the time.)

Ormond is suing CAA for negligence and breach of fiduciary duty.

Miramax, the company that Weinstein co-founded with his brother Bob, and The Walt Disney Company, which owned Miramax in the 90's, are being sued for negligent supervision and retention. (Numerous former Miramax and Disney executives are cited in the lawsuit, including Michael Eisner, who was Disney's CEO, at the time, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, who was chairman of Disney, though they are not defendants. The Disney execs mentioned in the lawsuit are no longer working at the company.)

"The men at CAA who represented Ormond knew about Weinstein. So too did Weinstein's employers at Miramax and Disney," the lawsuit states. "Brazenly, none of these prominent companies warned Ormond that Weinstein had a history of assaulting women because he was too important, too powerful, and made them too much money."

Weinstein, CAA, Disney and Miramax did not immediately respond to *Variety's* request for comment.

In a phone interview, Ormond tells *Variety* that she is speaking out because she wants to be part of the change that can make Hollywood and other workplaces safer from sexual predators.

"I am coming forward with my story now publicly because I feel as if we still need systemic change, and I feel that we need accountability from enablers, in order to get there," Ormond tells *Variety*. "I feel that this is what happened with me."

Ormond is filing her suit under the Adult Survivors Act, which creates a look-back window outside the statute of limitations. The Adult Survivors Act was passed after the #MeToo movement, and Ormond says she's able to share her story because of the courage of other women and survivors. Ormond hopes that by sharing her story, she can make an impact in corporate transparency regarding reporting structures in the workplace and the use of non-disclosure agreements to silence victims.

"Obviously, Harvey Weinstein is in jail and is going to be in jail for a very long time. I personally don't believe that Harvey could have done this without enablers. And for me, that is the layer that you have to get down to, in terms of the root cause," Ormond says.

"If you think about it," she continues, "If there had been best practices and Harvey Weinstein had been called out at the start after his first sexual harassment or his first sexual assault, he could have learned different behaviors, and potentially all of the people that followed wouldn't have been harmed. But he wasn't. And there's a reason for that."

Ormond says that other than telling her agents in the '90s, she harbored her secret up until the #MeToo movement, which gave her the courage to talk to her family. A weight was lifted off her shoulders with their support, but she still felt compelled to speak out publicly because she has felt guilt and shame for the other women who were allegedly hurt by Weinstein.

Weinstein — who has been convicted of rape in two jurisdictions and is currently serving a 23-year sentence in New York, which will be consecutively followed by a 16-year sentence in Los Angeles — has been accused by more than 100 women over the course of decades. Many of the accusations in Ormond's lawsuit echo a pattern of behavior that has been alleged by other women who have accused Weinstein. He maintains his innocence and is appealing both of his convictions.

“Part of my closure has to be talking about it publicly, and I think part of that is intertwined with the people who followed,” Ormond says. “Not only did I wrestle with what happened to me, but I really wrestled with the fact that other people were hurt. And they knew.”





Julia Ormond attends a premiere in 1996, shortly after the alleged assault. *Penske Media via Getty Images*

Ormond first met Weinstein in 1994 at a business meeting in London that her U.K. agent had set up, telling her that an “important producer” wanted to meet with her about a film role. At that meeting, Weinstein and Ormond discussed the film business and multiple potential roles. “Weinstein acted appropriately during the meeting, and they agreed to stay in contact,” the suit states. After that initial meeting, Weinstein would send film scripts to Ormond, and they would speak over the phone and Ormond would give her notes on scripts.

The two developed a close, but professional, business relationship. In 1995, when Ormond was on the cover of *New York Times Magazine*, which championed her as the next biggest female movie star after Julia Roberts, Weinstein gave a glowing quote to the publication to rave about her talents, not just as an actor — but also as a producer, saying that Ormond has “the best story sense of any young actress in America today,” and that, “I once got 26 pages of notes from her about a script. She can pull them apart and find the flaws.”

In August 1995, her agents at CAA negotiated a two-year production deal with Weinstein’s company, Miramax, for Ormond and her production company, which would be under a first-look deal at the company. Through this deal, Ormond worked from Miramax’s New York City offices and lived in an apartment paid for by Miramax.

“At the time that Huvane and Lourd negotiated and secured the production company agreement for Ormond, they well knew of Weinstein’s propensity for sexually assaultive and exploitative behavior, particularly as to young actresses whom Weinstein was meeting for business purposes,” the lawsuit states. “On information and belief, Huvane and Lourd also had knowledge of confidential settlements that Weinstein reached to keep his conduct hidden from public exposure. But they did not disclose these circumstances to Ormond or otherwise warn her about Weinstein’s propensity for sexual assault.”

In a 2017 investigative report in the [New York Times](#), CAA was named as being part of “Weinstein’s Complicity Machine.” At the time, the agency issued [this statement](#): “We apologize to any person the agency let down for not meeting the high expectations we place on ourselves, as individuals and as a company. We unequivocally support those who have spoken out publicly.”

When Ormond was allegedly assaulted by Weinstein in December 1995, her career was red hot. She had been the female lead in films such as “Legends of the Fall,” in which she co-starred with Anthony Hopkins and Brad Pitt, “First Night, opposite Sean Connery and Richard Gere, and a remake of “Sabrina” with Harrison Ford. The night of the alleged

assault, Ormond was scheduled to have a business dinner with Weinstein to discuss a film that she was producing at Miramax that Weinstein had been stalling on, according to the complaint.

“At the dinner, Weinstein refused to discuss business matters and kept changing the subject. Finally, following dinner, Weinstein said he would only discuss the project back at the apartment Miramax had provided for Ormond as part of their first-look deal with her,” the lawsuit states. “Her defenses down because she had consumed several drinks, and wanting to finally get to what she thought was the purpose of their meeting, Ormond agreed to have Weinstein come back to her apartment. Soon after, Weinstein stripped naked and forced her to perform oral sex on him.”

The suit claims that the incident could have been prevented if Ormond was protected by Disney, Miramax and CAA.

“That sexual assault on Ormond could have been prevented if Miramax or Disney had properly supervised Weinstein and not retained him while knowing that he was a danger to the women he encountered at work. Likewise, had CAA fulfilled its legal duties to Ormond to look out for her well-being, to not place her in danger, and to warn her about Weinstein’s predations, Ormond would not have been in a position to be victimized by Harvey Weinstein,” the suit says.

In the suit, Ormond’s attorneys allege that when she disclosed the alleged assault to her agents at CAA, they did not take any steps to protect her.

“Not only did CAA fail to meet those basic obligations, but it compounded the damage once Ormond told her CAA agents, Bryan Lourd and Kevin Huvane, what Weinstein had done to her,” the lawsuit says. “Rather than take Ormond’s side and advocate for her interest, they suggested that if she reported Weinstein to the authorities, she would not be believed, and he would seriously damage her career. Still worse, not long after Weinstein’s assault on Ormond and her reporting of the assault to them, CAA lost interest in representing her, and her career suffered dramatically.”

After the alleged assault, the suit states that Weinstein planned to visit Ormond in Copenhagen where she would be filming the 1997 thriller, “Smilla’s Sense of Snow,” though Weinstein and Miramax had nothing to do with the film. Ormond was “horrified” and “called Lourd and Huvane — though she hadn’t shared the backstory yet — to plead with them to stop Weinstein from coming to Copenhagen. But they refused,” the suit says, “and suggested that if Ormond did not want him there, she needed to deal with him herself.” The suit goes on to detail that Ormond faced Weinstein and told him that what he did to her was “unacceptable” and that she would not “tolerate” that behavior. She then called her agents, which is when she told them about the alleged sexual assault, and the suit says they did not “express any empathy” or “surprise.”

“Huvane and Lourd then focused on the assault from Weinstein’s perspective, asking Ormond whether Weinstein might have believed that Ormond had consented, and suggested that it was Weinstein’s perception of the event — not Ormond’s actual lack of consent — that legally mattered,” the suit says. “Lourd and Huvane also told Ormond that if she took action such as going to the police she may not be believed, and that she risked further angering Weinstein, who could be even more punitive. They also told Ormond that she could get a lawyer and seek a settlement, but they emphasized that she shouldn’t expect to receive more than \$100,000, which they apparently believed was the going rate for being sexually assaulted by Harvey Weinstein. Lourd and Huvane advised Ormond to consider whether such a settlement was worth it given how much money she was making in film. Finally, they cautioned Ormond that she should not speak to people about what Weinstein had done because he would sue her for libel.”

Ormond alleges that she faced retaliation for rejecting Weinstein and for trying to hold him accountable for what he did to her. Shortly after her call to CAA, Miramax terminated its contract with her.

“Ormond soon felt Weinstein’s wrath,” the suit states.

The lawsuit says that Ormond “had a follow-up conversation with Lourd and Huvane, during which she again discussed her concerns relating to her sexual assault and the associated trauma and her confusion around CAA being unwilling to protect her.” After that conversation, Ormond was transferred to a less experienced agent, the suit claims. Eventually, she left CAA.



Julia Ormond starred opposite Brad Pitt in “Legends of the Fall” in 1994.

In more recent years, Ormond has appeared in television movies and series, but she’s no longer an A-lister. Her attorneys say that she was earning \$3.5 million per film at the peak of her career. In 2010, she won an Emmy for her supporting role in HBO’s “Temple Grandin.” In 2013, she starred in Lifetime’s series “Witches of East End,” and in 2020, she was a regular in a low-rated spinoff of “The Walking Dead: World Beyond.”

“The damage to Ormond’s career because of Weinstein’s assault and the aftermath was catastrophic both personally and professionally,” the lawsuit says, noting that she has “nearly disappeared from the public eye.”

Ormond says that friends have checked in on her over the years and journalists have frequently asked her, “What happened to you?”

“They sort of suspected that maybe something,” Ormond says, over the phone, sharing that she has journaled about her alleged experience.

“I don’t presume that this happened because people wanted it to happen. But it happened, nevertheless. And it wasn’t stopped,” Ormond says. “There should have been structures in place.”

She continues, “There’s no way that Harvey did this without people knowing. If people knew, they were either too afraid to step up, or they allowed the profit that they were making from their relationship with him to justify a cover-up.”

In a statement to *Variety*, Ormond’s lawyers say she looks forward to her day in court.

“Our client has suffered tremendously both personally and professionally due to the assault by Harvey Weinstein, and the failure from Disney, Miramax and CAA to prevent it and to appropriately respond when she reported what happened,” Douglas H. Wigdor and Effie Blassberger say. “She feels completely betrayed by CAA for its knowing disregard for her safety and well-being, and looks forward to holding accountable the people and institutions that enabled Harvey Weinstein’s horrific and predatory behavior.”

In her lawsuit, Ormond’s lawyers say that all these years later, the impact of Weinstein’s alleged crimes is still being uncovered.

“CAA, Miramax, and Disney continued to handsomely profit from their close association with Harvey Weinstein for many years after Ormond was assaulted by him and then cast aside by Hollywood,” the lawsuit states. “But the damage to Ormond — and so many other women Harvey Weinstein went on to rape, assault, and harass — has yet to be fully understood.”

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