

Final Draft: Marcus Renna.

Sexism in Hollywood: A comparative analysis of sexism then and now

During the course of Hollywood history, many scandals have struck the infamous entertainment industry: gossip, sex, infidelity, extramarital affairs, marriages and divorces. None has quite made their mark on Hollywood territory like that of Sexism, a particular beast which even after all of these years still continues to rear its ugly head. What is sexism? According to Merriam-Webster, sexism is “prejudice or discrimination based on sex, especially in regards to women.” From Marilyn Monroe to Angelina Jolie, women from all decades of Hollywood have suffered from one form of sexism or another, be it compensation, discrimination, ageism, typecasting, the denial of scriptorial or directorial rights, rape or solicited for sexual favors in order to find work, sadly *nothing* has changed, and Hollywood’s leading ladies of today remain prey and at the mercy of the lustful desires of Hollywood’s biggest executives.

Harvey Weinstein:

In recent times, the Harvey Weinstein scandal has sparked much controversy. Big name actresses such as Heather Graham, Salma Hayek, and Angelina Jolie have come forward to expose the misdeeds done to them by Weinstein. According to an article by USA Today titled *Harvey Weinstein Scandal: A Complete List of the 87 Accusers* in order for these women to find work in Hollywood, Weinstein solicited sexual favors in order for them to advance. First and foremost was actress Heather Graham who vividly recalls her encounter with Weinstein and shed light on the incident in her essay for *Variety*. Graham claimed that in the early 2000’s when she was looking for work, Weinstein specified that in order for her to obtain a role in one of his latest films she would have to engage in sex with him. Whether or not she did, Graham notes that she was *never* hired for any of the films he had produced (Moniuzko and Kelly 2017). How many

other actresses in Hollywood would find themselves prey trapped in Weinstein's Web? How many other women would be blacklisted or forever miss their shot on the silver screen for not placating to the sadistic desires of Weinstein?



"Heather Graham Net Worth" wisetoast.com, January 15th, 2017.

https://www.google.com/search?q=heather+graham&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjXpJm9kubAhVvTt8KHQ TCysQ_AUIDigB&biw=1600&bih=783#imgrc=IPvJfy4d04cVHM:&spf=1542825936201, Date Accessed: 11/18/2018.

Another actress who had fallen prey to Weinstein was well known actress Salma Hayek, whom explained her ordeal to the New York Times. Hayek claimed that Weinstein had made many unwanted advances on her during their time working together on the film *Frida*. Allegedly,

Weinstein solicited massages, showers, and even oral sex. According to Hayek when she refused, he threatened to kill her, and even verbally assaulted her during their time together on set. However, the harassment did not just stop there. Another well-known actress Angelina Jolie, told the times that she too was also sexually harassed by Weinstein when she was just 23 years of age. According to the actress, Weinstein made sexual advances to her in a hotel room; this incident marked not only the beginning, but the end of Jolie's work experience with Weinstein. The actress has since then vowed to never work with Weinstein again, and warns others before engaging in film projects with Weinstein. However, would the harassment end just with Weinstein? What about other major Hollywood producers or big-name actors? What did other women have to endure in order to find work within the industry?

Bill Cosby:

In even more recent times, actresses have stepped forward to expose the equally appalling advancements made by once beloved father figure and actor Bill Cosby. According to an article by Noreen Malone and Amanda Demme of *The Cut* titled "*I'm No Longer Afraid: 35 Women Tell Their Stories About Being assaulted by Bill Cosby, and the culture that wouldn't listen*" several other big-name actresses such as Heidi Thomas, Jewel Allison, and Victoria Valentino actress stepped forward to discuss the sexual harassment they had faced by Cosby. Heidi Thomas recounts the time when her agent had set her up for a private acting lesson with Cosby. According to Thomas, Cosby at first was very friendly. She attempted to pull out a monologue she had prepared but he rejected it. Apparently, he had told her "Let's try a cold read," it was then and there that he proceeded to pull out a script which contained a scene that was set in a bar. Thomas' character was someone who was supposed to be intoxicated, to make it real Cosby poured a glass of white wine. After Cosby had poured the glass of wine, he instructed her to use

the glass of wine as a prop. She exclaimed not to remember much, except waking up in his bedroom. Upon waking up, she noticed he was naked and forcing himself into her mouth (Malone and Demme 2015). Did Cosby, Hollywood's once most beloved father figure's harassment cease after this incident with Thomas? Did it cease at all? Unfortunately, Cosby would provide us with more examples of sexism in the industry, as well as more unjust acts actresses would have to partake in, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

Jewel Allison was introduced to Cosby by her modeling agent. Allison claimed that Cosby wanted to meet with her and she agreed, as she thought the sole purpose of the meeting was for a role in an upcoming show. She claimed that when she arrived no one was around but Cosby whom like with Thomas, offered her a glass of wine. She recalled of the wine tasting horribly, and that she suddenly became ill. She then recalled of Cosby holding her up by her underarms with both of his hands, walking her into the room next door, and then asking her to view herself in the mirror as "something was wrong with her." She then remembered him pulling her by her right hand, and then putting it behind her back. She recalled viewing semen on the floor and felt a foreign substance on her hand. She knew that Cosby had *involuntarily* included her in something sexual (Malone and Demme 2015). However, Cosby's advancements did not just stop there. A slew of many other actresses came forward to expose Cosby's Misdeeds.

Victoria Valentino recalls her encounter with Cosby. Allegedly, Cosby had invited Valentino and her roommate out to dinner. She recalls Cosby flirting with her friend and trying to seduce her. In the process of doing so, he reached across the table and presented Valentino (whose son at the time had passed away), with a pill and placed it next to her wine glass. She said he

exclaimed that *it* would “make her feel better,” and after all she had endured she agreed. Upon washing down the pill with red wine, he then applied another pill to Valentino’s mouth, and proceeded to do the same with her friend. After ingesting the pill, she explained to Cosby that she wanted to go home. Cosby promised to take them home; little did they know *his* home. Upon arriving, Valentino remembers Cosby sitting next to her roommate who was completely unconscious with a very predatory look on his face. It was not long after that she recalled Cosby moving over towards her, sitting down next to her and unzipping his fly. He forcibly had her perform oral sex on him, but that was not enough. He then stood her up, turned her over, and that penetrated her anally. When he had finished raping her he simply got up and attempted to walk out of the room. Upon leaving, Valentino stopped him and asked him how to get out of there, and how to get home, he simply responded to Valentino by telling her “to call a cab” (Malone and Demme 2015). Upon reading about the perverted acts these women endured at the cost of their mental, emotional and physical health. I wanted to take a look back in time to see if much had really changed, if anything had really changed at all or if the “requirements” for employment had worsened over the past 60 years, not at all.

Marilyn Monroe:

During the 1950’s some of Hollywood’s leading ladies also suffered from the devastating effects of sexual harassment. Like today’s leading ladies these women also had to strip or succumb to their producers will in order to gain work in the industry. First and foremost, a star that comes to mind is the unparalleled Marilyn Monroe. However, the unchallenged status of fame and fortune that Monroe acquired did not come without a price. In her biography, *Marilyn Monroe* by Barbara Learning, Learning provides readers with an example of the sexual abuse Marilyn had to go through. According to Learning, during a pre-fame run at Fox Studios (during

1940's), Marilyn was let go. "When her contract came up for renewal, the studio decided to let her go because production chief Darryl Zanuck thought she was unattractive...horribly disappointed, Marilyn was prepared to do anything to get her career moving again" (Leaming 15).

Anything, is what anybody who is desperate to make ends meet will do just to survive. The studio executives in Hollywood during that time knew that young and upcoming actresses were desperate to make ends meet, and took full advantage. In Marilyn's case many executives abused her willingly and knowingly, specifically, the board chairman at Fox studios, Joe Schenck. "Marilyn became a regular at Uncle Joe's. Schenck took a special liking to her, and soon she came to be known as Joe Schenck's girl." She stood behind his chair as he played cards. She served drinks and emptied ashtrays. Before long, Marilyn was at the house several nights a week for dinner. *To keep the old man happy*, she even briefly moved into the guest cottage in order to be nearby when he wanted her at night. Uncle Joe repaid Marilyn by persuading Harry Cohn, the president of Columbia Studios, to sign her to a six-month contract. She started at Columbia Pictures in March 1948" (Leaming 15). What sexual favors did Monroe have to provide Schenck with? Would the appeasement end with Schenck? Or would Monroe have to continue shelling out favors when the fleeting halcyon days at Columbia ceased to exist?

In fact, when Monroe's contract with Columbia expired (most likely due to Marilyn turning down an invite to Harry Cohn's yacht, for Fred Karger a vocal coach who too used her for sexual favor and turned her down), Marilyn had no choice but to re-solicit the help of Schenck "so Marilyn was back on the party circuit-except this time she no longer had the

protection of being 'Joe Schenck's girl.' When Marilyn attended Uncle Joe's Parties, or accompanied him to Palm Springs for the weekend, he was happy to pass *her* around to friends. There were plenty of men willing to take Marilyn upstairs for half an hour, but no one even seemed even remotely interested in casting her in a film" (Leaming 16). "Though Marilyn did her best to play the happy girl, the party circuit was brutal, degrading, sometimes dangerous business. At times, the men became violent. On one occasion, Marilyn found herself in a bedroom, with two men holding her down while a third tried to rape her." "She had no illusions about what most of the guests expected from her and the other girls" (Leaming 16). Again, Monroe would find herself entangled in a web of Hollywood's lies and deceit. Would she find the breakthrough she was looking for? If Monroe found the breakthrough she was looking for, would it come without a price? Or would it once again be at her expense?

Eventually, Marilyn fell into the lap of producer Johnny Hyde who fell helplessly in love with Marilyn, or so appeared to. Unlike Schenck, Hyde was able to promote Marilyn to the point she was cast in more valuable pictures. "Finally, Hyde's persistence paid off. With Sam Spiegel's help, he persuaded John Huston to let Marilyn read for a role in his new film. That was the break they had been waiting for. *The Asphalt Jungle* proved Johnny correct. In due course, some of the very men who had overlooked Marilyn at Hollywood parties were interested in using her. At Johnny's urging, Joseph Mankiewicz viewed a rough cut of Huston's film in early 1950; he promptly offered Marilyn a tiny role in *All About Eve*." Howard Hawks, once so scornful of Marilyn, fired off a telegram congratulating Huston on his discovery of "the girl." "All about Eve was the second. On the basis of the rushes, Darryl Zanuck agreed to take her back at Twentieth Century-Fox. Hyde negotiated a new seven-year contract that went into effect on

May 11, 1950” (Leaming 18). It seemed that Monroe had finally gotten noticed, but would it last? What else would she have to endure in order to secure her spot in the limelight?

It was no surprise that the success Marilyn had attained was short lived, it wasn't long before Marilyn found herself back at square one seeking work like many of today's actresses. Hyde who had helped Marilyn and who had seemed to care for her genuinely, sought after something more like most producers in today's industry. “Johnny wanted *something* in exchange for all that he had done. He wanted *Marilyn* to be his wife. Marilyn refused. She was perfectly willing to sleep with little Johnny, but she wouldn't consider marriage to a man she did not love. He pleaded, he threatened, he cajoled. He *warned* that without his help; Marilyn would soon be right back on her ass with all the other girls” (Leaming 19). Would Marilyn be the only actress from the Hollywood Heyday to suffer at the hands of studio executives?

Jayne Mansfield:

Following in Monroe's footsteps, Hollywood's other leading blonde bombshell of the 1950's, Jayne Mansfield also found herself subject to the scandals of the film industry. After a failed screen test at Paramount Studios, Jayne teamed up with Jim Byron whom like Schenck and Hyde was also a well-known producer in Hollywood. In an attempt to get Jayne noticed, he did not solicit favors from Jayne in the bedroom, but instead *exploited* her body in order to help make gains. “During the Christmas holiday, Jim Byron came up with the idea of taking Jayne around to the local newspaper city rooms. Once inside, she could slip up behind the poor tired newspaper man who was stuck on duty over Christmas. She could then put her arms around him, kiss him on the back of the neck, and give him “some Christmas cheer” (Strait 4). It is not hard

for audiences to see that Jayne followed in Marilyn's footsteps to a fault. However, what would it take to land Jayne the big breakthrough she had been so desperately looking for?

Because the stunt got Jayne noticed by the local newspaper team, Byron decided to take it one step further, this time along with the help of one of her photographer friends Peter Gowland, who was placed on standby during an upcoming film premier for Jane Russell's *Underwater*. The stunt that pursued succeeded in catapulting Mansfield from an unknown to an ultimate Hollywood starlet. "RKO Pictures, under the auspices of Howard Hughes, was launching a publicity junket to Florida to publicize Jane Russell's new film, *Underwater*. Once in Florida, one of Jayne's photographer friends, Peter Gowland, "loaned" her a red bikini. Since Jane (Russell) wasn't due in until the following day, the photographers lolled about the pool with little to do. Jayne, deploring their lack of enthusiasm decided to do something to perk them up. Their lethargy soon turned into a hurricane of activity" (Strait 44). Jayne dove in top covered and careerless, but emerged topless with opportunity knocking at her front door. "I dived in, undid my bikini top, and came up bouncing." "I planned it differently, but I ran into a problem. I was going to come up and toss the bikini top to the photographers. Because it wasn't my size, I had trouble getting it over my head. I thought I had blown to whole thing" (Strait 44). Nevertheless, the botched stunt worked in Jayne's favor. According to Strait, the following had occurred after Jayne's exploitation, "Far from blowing the whole thing, the stunt was immensely successful. The wire services carried Jayne Mansfield's name and picture around the world. Headlines sizzled: "Jayne Out-points Jane" (Strait 44). "When Jayne stepped down from the plane on her return to Hollywood, the press corps was waiting. They had given her a lot of free press, and they wanted a closer look. Some of the studios also wanted a second look at someone who could

generate so much publicity. As a result, “Jim maneuvered her into a seven-year contract at Warner Brothers, beginning at \$250 a week and escalating each year...” (Strait 45). Again, like Monroe, Mansfield found herself at the mercy of Hollywood producers when her career failed to launch and roles dried up.

Jayne found herself turning to king of exploitation Hugh Hefner, “Jayne & Mickey were offered starring roles in a then controversial movie called *Promises, Promises* (1963) with Marie McDonald & Tommy Noonan. It was to be the movie world’s first scene in a major Hollywood movie, and Jayne was the candidate. Mickey was not enthused about Jayne the mother of three appearing nude in a film, and to make things completely worse, Playboy magazine was covering the shoot and doing a special feature layout called, “THE NUDEST JAYNE MANSFIELD” (Ferruccio 30). According Ferruccio, after the film’s release, the film was revoked and banned in many parts of the United States. In fact, Hefner himself was arrested later that year in Chicago for issuing the magazine for ‘being lude & indecent’ (Ferruccio 30). Upon finding out all I had, I was lead to wonder if Marilyn and Jayne the only two actresses of the Heyday who endured this suffering? Had any other bombshells found themselves at the mercy of Hollywood’s top producers?



“Jayne Mansfield and Marilyn Monroe.” Flickr.com, December 23rd, 2008.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/30950890@N03/3131936279>, Date Accessed: 11/18/2018.

Mamie Van Doren:

Blonde bombshell Mamie Van Doren whom alongside Marilyn and Jayne was considered the third and surviving of “The Three M’s” during the 1950’s has also recently come forward to shed light on the sexual harassment she endured during her time in the Hollywood spotlight. In a recent article by Perez Hilton titled *Film Legend Mamie Van Doren Says At 16 years Old She Was “Just The Right Age” For Bob Hope In SAVAGE Facebook Post!* Van Doren came forward claiming that when she was 16 years old Bob Hope tried to have sex with her. Naturally, Van

Doren refused, and as a result said she was blackballed. Unlike Marilyn and Jayne, Mamie was reduced to smaller secondary roles and as a result her career never really took off.



“Girls Town, Mamie Van Doren, 1959.” Allposters.com, https://www.allposters.com/-sp/Girls-Town-Mamie-Van-Doren-1959-Posters_i13187230_.htm, Date Accessed: 11/19/2018

Judy Garland:

Another actress who had also endured underage sexual harassment was beloved Judy Garland. Garland’s time at MGM studios was anything but over the rainbow. In his biography *Get Happy: The Life of Judy Garland*” biographer Gerald Clarke sheds light on what Garland endured at the hands of MGM studio head Louis B. Mayer. “Between the ages of sixteen and twenty, Judy herself was to be approached for sex – and approached again and again. ‘Don’t think they all didn’t try,’ she said. Top on the list was Mayer himself. Whenever he complimented her on her voice – she sang from the heart, he said – Mayer would invariably place his hand on her left breast to show just where her heart was. ‘I often thought I was lucky,’ observed Judy, ‘that I didn’t sing with another part of my anatomy.’ That scenario, a compliment followed by a grope, was repeated many times until, grown up at last, Judy put a stop to it. ‘Mr.

Mayer, don't you ever, ever do that again,' she finally had the courage to say. 'I just will not stand for it' (Clarke 2009).

Salary Discrimination:

If you think that the injustices these women faced ended at the bedroom or casting couch, guess again. Adding more insult to injury was the compensation discrimination these women faced much to the benefit of their male co-stars and yes, other female co-stars. In recent times, much debate has been sparked over the inequality in pay rates between female actresses and their male costars. According to an article by Jessica Chandra, *The Biggest, Most Outrageous Pay Discrepancies in Hollywood History* many female leads have been paid significantly less than male leads. After actor Kevin Spacey was accused of sexual harassment, actor Christopher Plummer was hired to portray his intended role in the film *All the Money in the World*. In order to complete the film correctly many of the scenes had to be reshot. This meant the actors Mark Wahlberg, Michelle Williams, as well as director Ridley Scott needed to be present. When interviewed by USA Scott claimed that most of the cast refused to receive financial compensation for their services while reshooting. When asked as to whether or not the actors would be paid regardless, he expressed that they would not, including Michelle Williams and him. However, USA uncovered the fact Wahlberg's team had negotiated a deal in which he would be paid \$1.5 million per each scene that was reshot. It is imperative to note that they revealed that Williams was not notified of Wahlberg's deal. To top it all off, USA also unveiled that Williams was only paid \$80 per diem which amounted to less than \$1,000 less than 1 percent of Wahlberg. Aside from today's actresses, did starlets of the silver screen also face salary discrimination? What were the discrepancies in their salaries?

According to Sarah Churchwell in her book *The Many Lives of Marilyn Monroe*, Marilyn blew a gasket and rightfully so when she found out the intended pay rate of her perceived co-star Frank Sinatra. “When shooting finished on *The River of No Return*, she refused to make her next assigned film, *The Girl in Pink Tights*. “Neither Joe nor Marilyn liked the script,” writes Wolfe, as “Marilyn thought her role stupid and ill-motivated, and Joe thought her part risqué,” but Spoto says that the role itself was only “one of the several straws in the burden of Marilyn’s resentment against Fox, “adding that she was “not mollified” to learn that her costar, Frank Sinatra was contracted at \$5,000 a week, four times her salary of \$1,250 a week.” (Churchwell, 2005, p. 229)

According to an article by How Stuff Works, Marilyn had been receiving significantly less pay than her co-star Jane Russell while filming *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. “*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* began production in November 1952. Reportedly, costar Jane Russell received between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for her appearance, while Marilyn was under contract for \$1,500 per week.” According to the website, the film itself had been originally intended for and written as a comeback vehicle for fellow blonde bombshell Bette Grable. To offset the costs, Fox cast Monroe instead. What Marilyn had made in total was absolutely abysmal in comparison to what Grable may have made. “She earned about \$18,000 for her work in the picture, while Grable might have cost Fox as much as \$150,000. Aware that she was being taken advantage of, Marilyn insisted on her own dressing room. As she told the Fox executives, “I am the blonde, and it is *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.” Jayne Mansfield, Fox’s alternative to Marilyn Monroe also could not dodge the same bullet despite the box office draw she had pulled during Monroe’s leave from Fox.

According to Ferruccio in his book *Did Success Spoil Jayne Mansfield?* The studio took equally full advantage of Mansfield while loaning her out to other studios to fulfill her contract. “When a 23-year old girl becomes a huge star in less than two years’ time, and is voted the most publicized Hollywood star in 1957, she is always trying to achieve or maintain that level of success. Jayne’s star peaked way too soon, and she chased after it the rest of her life. Skouros made sure that this would never happen, so Fox sent her off to Europe to make less than average movies on loan to other film studios. Fox made their money -- \$250,000 per loan out – while Jayne only got her \$2500 a week...” (Ferruccio 47). Aside from sexual harassment and salary discrepancies what were some of the other forms of sexism Hollywood’s leading ladies faced?

Age Discrimination:

In Hollywood, the age of an actor seldom ever matters even if it really ever matters at all, but if an actress is deemed too old, age becomes a whole other issue. It is imperative to note that ageism is another form of sexism, or gender bias that actresses face daily in Hollywood. As if sexual harassment and unequal pay rates aren’t enough to deal with, women of Hollywood also have this burden to battle with. In an article for Elle titled *Patricia Arquette on Talk of Her Aging: “Men Are Not Having These Conversations”* by Megan Friedman, actress Patricia Arquette talks about the effects of ageism and how it has affected her career. She called out studio executives for telling her what she looked like on film versus what she didn’t look like or was supposed to look like. She responded, “What are we supposed to look like?” and brought light to the fact that women and only women in Hollywood were having these conversations. She also called out the ageism she has faced from male costars that in their mid-fifties refused to work with actresses in their early forties simply because, “she was too old for him.” She also brought to light the fact that audiences were no longer buying what the industry was selling; she

referenced the film *Magic in the Moonlight*, which featured actress Emma Stone whom at the time was 26 and actor Colin Firth whom at the time was 56, a whopping 28-year difference. What other actresses were denied roles because they were simply deemed too old? Was it by much? What roles did they miss because of it?

In an interview with *Glamour*, actress Elizabeth Banks explained that back in 2001 when she tested for the role of Mary Jane in *Spider-Man*, she was turned away because she was told she was too old to play the character. According to Banks, both she and actor Tobey Maguire were the same age when studio executives told her she was too old to play the role of Mary Jane. She was only a whopping 16 months older than Maguire, and was about 27 years of age when she tested for the role. Marvel instead cast actress Kirsten Dunst who was 20 years old, just only 7 years younger than Maguire and Banks. However, it is imperative to note that the characters of Mary Jane and Peter Parker (*Spiderman*) were meant in fact to be the same age. Instead Marvel cast Banks in the role of Betty Brant who was rather secondary and unimportant to the storyline. However, it is imperative to note that actresses of Hollywood's Golden Era also faced the discriminating effects of ageism.

In 1955 Elia Kazan was set to direct one of the year's biggest pictures *Baby Doll*. According to Michelle Vogel in her biography titled, *Marilyn Monroe: Her Films, Her Life* Marilyn had asked Kazan to cast her for the lead role. Eventually, Kazan decided not to use Monroe as he felt she was "too old" so instead he cast actress Carroll Baker who was just a few years younger than her (Vogel 188). How much younger was Baker? Only a whopping four and a half years. In her biography *Marilyn Monroe Day by Day: A Timeline of People, Places, and*

Events author Carl Rollyson cites Monroe who recalls being told by Kazan that she was “too old to play the part of a twenty year old” (Rollyson 157). In a private diary Monroe had written the following “He said that I’ve become so deified as a sex symbol that the public would *never* accept me as a virgin and as a nineteen/twenty year old” (Rollyson 157). Furthermore, she mentions Tennessee Williams wanting her and only her to play the lead in the film claiming “I don’t want anybody else” (Rollyson 157). Was Monroe the only starlet to be denied a role during the heyday? Who else during this time period could have faced such discrimination?

Another actress (whom much to Monroe’s advantage) suffered the devastating effects of ageism was Fox’s blonde bombshell of the 1940’s (and Marilyn’s co-star Betty Grable.) Known for her equally appealing figure, legs, and talent Betty co-starred alongside Marilyn Monroe and Lauren Bacall in Fox’s 1953 hit *How to Marry a Millionaire*. Following shortly after, Fox drew up a script for Bacall in another would be hit titled *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, originally, she was intended to star alongside Jane Russell but in their book titled *You Ain’t Heard Nothin’ yet: Interviews with Stars from Hollywood’s Golden Era* by James Bawden and Ronald G. Miller the infamous Darryl F Zanuck had different plans. In an interview between Russell and Bawn, Russell shed light as to what happened ‘Did you know Fox bought it for Betty Grable, but Zanuck pointedly told her she was too *old*’ (Bawden and Miller 182). In his biography titled *Marilyn Revealed: The Ambitious Life of an American Icon* by Ted Schwarz, while discussing Monroe heading down the same path as Grable he too talks about how the industry used her, and how when she became “old” Fox wanted nothing to do with her. “She (Marilyn) would be like the young Betty Grable, who had been placed in the same type of movie over and over again for a decade. The Public flocked to see her. Men who had used her picture as the most popular pin-

up of World War II lusted after her. She gained ever-larger contracts, becoming wealthy without ever being given a chance to prove the range of her acting ability. And then, at the age of thirty-six, Grable was suddenly boring, *too old* to prove that she could do more than be the sexy blonde in musicals” (Schwarz 389). Not long after, Bette’s opportunities began to decline. She would star in her last picture in 1955, Fox would never hire her again.



“Marilyn Monroe and Bette Grable Candid.” Stuffnobodycaresabout.com, May 15th, 2012.

<http://stuffnobodycaresabout.com/2012/05/15/classic-hollywood-13/>, Date Accessed: 11/19/2018

Becoming Typecast:

Aside from ageism, women of the silver screen were also typecast. Hollywood’s buxom blondes of the heyday had no choice but to remain that way and portray roles that were complimentary to their looks, beneficial to studios, but not to their careers. These actresses were immediately deemed incapable of portraying any other kind of role and immediately shut down when they expressed the desire to do so. Not only did this not allow actresses to showcase the

diversity of their talents but it stunted their career growth and hindered any possibility of moving up in the entertainment industry. According to Sam Staggs in his book *The Return of Marilyn Monroe*, when speaking of a kitten that Marilyn named after a role she earnestly sought after, Marilyn was ridiculed by the studio for wanting to play the role of *Grushenka* in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

“She named the kitten Grushenka, even though she wasn’t sure it was a female.” “Grushenka was a name she adored-she fell in love with the sound of it when she first read *The Brothers Karamazov*. She yearned to play the earthly Grushenka, but when Hollywood filmed the story Maria Schell got the role. She was considered a brilliant actress *just because* she came from Europe” (Staggs 131). “And they made fun of Marilyn for daring to dream of such an ambitious part. Producers and directors who could barely read the newspapers, let alone Dostoyevsky (the author), had chortled. Hedda Hopper made catty remarks in her column. When a reporter asked Marilyn, “Is it true you want to play *The Brothers Karamazov*? She replied “I don’t want to play the brothers. I want to play Grushenka. She’s a *girl* you know” (Staggs 131). Following in Marilyn’s footsteps once again was actress Jayne Mansfield.

According to Erik Liberman in his article titled *Jayne Mansfield: The First Reality Star?* The following had happened to Mansfield at a run in with journalists “On a whistle-stop promotional tour for the film adaptation of *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* Jayne began telling journalists that, more than anything, she wanted to play Hamlet. They thought she was joking.” As if it wasn’t bad enough that Hollywood’s blonde bombshells of the 1950’s were typecast for their appearance, other actresses and minorities would experience prejudice not just for their appearance but for their ethnic background.

Racial Profiling:

In recent times, Italian-American actress Jennifer Esposito who had expressed an interest in playing other roles beside the stereotypical Italian-American girl spoke out against the ordeal of typecasting. In his article, *Jennifer Esposito: I Lost 5 Roles in Last Month Because I'm "Not White Enough"* by Jeremy Fuster, Esposito sheds light on the fact that she was told she was "not white enough" when she had applied to work in five different upcoming projects. She expressed her frustrations through a facebook post with other actresses who had gone through the same ordeal. She claimed that she was not even allowed in rooms to pursue the opportunity of attaining certain roles, and talked about how she was not even given a chance to read the intended script without being dubbed not right for the role. Much like Marilyn and Jayne who were in the business for years, Esposito also shed light on the fact that seniority within the business did not matter at all. In another article by Jessica Rawden titled, *Former NCIS Actress Says She's Been Told She's Not White Enough* Esposito credits much of the hindrance on her career due to her last name. She expressed the fact that she felt when people see the name "Esposito" they tend to judge her right away, automatically stereotyping her and prohibiting her from reading or auditioning for other roles. When will actresses in Hollywood stop being racially profiled? Should an actress's name be what makes or breaks her career or her talents? How will Hollywood address this issue as well as the many other atrocities that sexism details?

How the Issue Is Being Addressed:

When or how does it stop? For starters, one can conclude that women in the industry always have and sadly will probably always have to continue to combat sexism and gender biases. To touch upon the issue, in 2006 Tarana Burke a social activist founded the now well renowned Me-Too Movement. With the recent reintroduction of the movement by actress Alyssa

Milano whom wanted to shed further light on the atrocities that plague Hollywood, women are now stepping out from all over to expose the injustices they have endured. This has proven to be beneficial as it has allowed actresses to expose the oppression they have experienced. But what about the fact that actresses may not be taken seriously? May be branded as complicit with the acts or as opportunists?

In an article for New Statesman, *The Year Women Said: Me Too*, Kate Malby addresses some of the benefits of actresses being able to express themselves through this movement. According to Malby, actresses being able to come out and say “me too” as opposed to “I was raped” allows public discussion about the topic to remain “polite.” However the downside, as Malby points out is that the publicizing of these issues can create a false sense of entitlement and instill more violence and coercion, ultimately forcing those who may not be ready to come forward, or may not want to come forward at all to come forward all together. In Lewis’ article, Malby also brings to light the issue of not having presentable evidence in order for actresses’ claims to be validated or taken seriously (Lewis 2018). In what way could the Me-Too movement improve, if it can improve at all? For me personally, it can improve if actresses document harassment whether through hidden cameras or recording devices, and then post it on the web. At that point the world will see first-hand what these women continue to endure and nobody can ever dismiss a claim, or wrongfully and degradingly mislabel an actress or her intentions because the proof will be well documented.

Works Cited

- Bawden, James and Miller, Ron. *You Ain't Heard Nothin' yet: Interviews with Stars from Hollywood's Golden Era*. University Press of Kentucky, 2017.
- Chandra, Jessica. "The Biggest, Most Outrageous Pay Discrepancies In Hollywood History." www.elle.com.au, March 13th, 2018. Date Accessed: 10/10/2018
- Churchwell, Sarah. *The Many Lives of Marilyn Monroe*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005.
- Clarke, Gerald. "Get Happy: The Life of Judy Garland." Random House Publishing Group 2009.
- Doll, Susan. "Marilyn Monroe's Early Career." <https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/marilyn-monroe-early-career.htm>, August 29th, 2007. Date Accessed: 10/12/2018
- "Enough." <https://www.thewrap.com/jennifer-esposito-lost-roles-told-not-white-enough/>, August 19th, 2018. Date Accessed: 10/28/2018.
- Ferruccio, Frank and Santorini, Damien. *Did Success Spoil Jayne Mansfield? Her Life and Pictures and Text*. Denver, Colo.: Outskirts Press Inc., 2010.
- Friedman, Megan. "Patricia Arquette on Talk of Her Aging: Men Are Not Having These Conversations" *Elle*, <https://www.elle.com/culture/movies-tv/news/a27145/patricia-arquette-shows-just-how-harsh-aging-talk-is-for-women/>. March 5th, 2015. Date Accessed: 10/15/2018.
- Fuster, Jeremy. "Jennifer Esposito: I Lost 5 Roles in Last Month Because I'm 'Not White

Hilton, Perez. "Film Legend Mamie Van Doren Says At 16 years Old She Was Just the Right Age" For Bob Hope In SAVAGE Facebook Post!" perezhilton.com, December 8th, 2017.

Date Accessed: 10/08/2018.

Leaming, Barbara. Marilyn Monroe. The Three Rivers Press. 2000.

Lieberman, Erik. "Jayne Mansfield: The First Reality Star?"

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/features/jayne-mansfield-first-reality-star-1017771>,

June 29th, 2017. Date Accessed: 10/28/2018.

Malone, Noreen and Demme, Amanda. "I'm No Longer Afraid: 35 Women Tell Their Stories About Being assaulted by Bill Cosby, and the culture that wouldn't listen" The Cut. July 26th, 2015. Date Accessed: 09/14/2018

Moniuszko, Sarah M and Kelly, Cara. "Harvey Weinstein Scandal: A Complete List of the 87 Accusers" USA Today. October 27th, 2017. Date accessed: 09/07/2018

Rollyson, Carle. Marilyn Monroe Day by Day: A Timeline of People, Places, and Events Rowman and Littlefield 2016.

Schwarz, Ted. Marilyn Revealed: The Ambitious Life of an American Icon. Taylor Trade Publishing: Distributed by National Book Network, 2009.

"Sexism." Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexism>. 2018. Web.

Date Accessed: 11/17/2018

Staggs, Sam. The Return of Marilyn Monroe. Shapolsky Publishers Inc., 1992.

Strait, Raymond. The Tragic Secret Life of Jayne Mansfield. Chicago: Henry Regenery, 1974.

Turner, Janice, Perez Criado, Caroline, Maltby, Kate, Lewis, Helen Grant, Linda and Ditung, Sarah . "The Year Women Said: Me Too."

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2018/10/year-women-said-me-too>,

October 10th, 2018. Date Accessed: 11/18/2018

Vogel, Michelle. *Marilyn Monroe: Her Films, Her Life*. McFarland & Company, 2014.