

Weinstein convicted of sex assault, rape

● He faces up to 29 years in prison on the two felony convictions

● Found not guilty of first-degree rape and predatory sexual assault

● More than 80 women have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct

AFP | New York

Harvey Weinstein was convicted Monday of rape and sexual assault but acquitted of the most serious predatory charges, a verdict hailed as a historic victory by the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct.

The 67-year-old was remanded in New York's notorious Rikers Island jail after the jury of seven men and five women found the once powerful Hollywood producer guilty of criminal sexual acts in the first degree and rape in the third degree.

However, he left Rikers Monday evening and was admitted to Bellevue Hospital Center in Manhattan for chest pains, his spokesperson told AFP.

Oscar-winner Weinstein, whose films include "Shakespeare In Love," was found not guilty of first-degree rape and predatory sexual assault, charges that could have seen him jailed for life.

But he faces up to 29 years in prison on the two felony convictions.

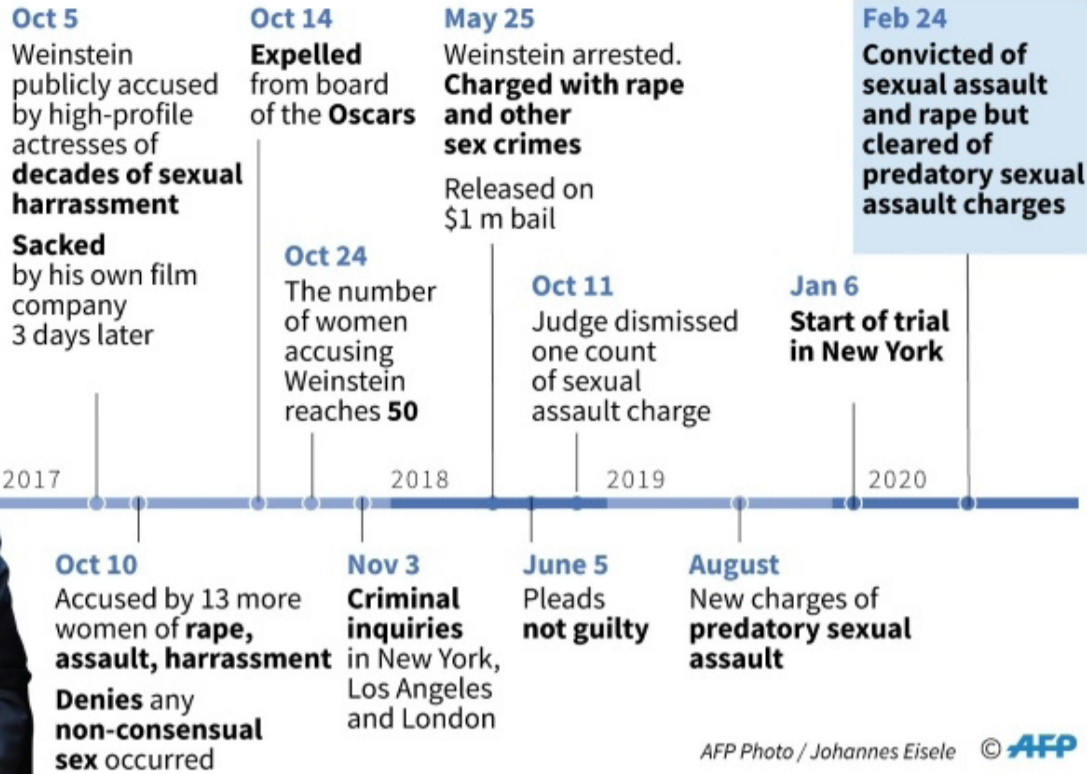
The ashen-faced defendant, who attended the trial hunched over a walker, showed little emotion after the verdict was delivered to a packed New York courtroom. He was taken into custody pending sentencing, which was scheduled for March 11.

His lawyer Arthur Aidala said a "shocked" Weinstein was muttering "I'm innocent, I'm innocent. How could this happen in

The Hollywood mogul was found not guilty of first-degree rape and predatory sexual assault charges that could have seen him jailed for life



67 years old



AFP Photo / Johannes Eisele © AFP



Former Actress Jessica Mann arrives for the trial of Harvey Weinstein at the Manhattan Criminal Court



Annabella Sciorra's allegation was too old to be prosecuted as an individual crime



Lawyer Donna Rotunno vowed an appeal

America?"

Lead attorney Donna Rotunno promised an appeal, saying "the fight is not over" and applauded Weinstein for taking the decision "like a man."

The mixed verdict offered a large measure of vindication for the dozens of women who made allegations against him.

It was the most high-profile sex assault conviction in the United States since Bill Cosby was found guilty in 2018 of drugging and sexually assaulting a woman 15 years prior.

The Time's Up foundation, formed in the wake of the Weinstein case, celebrated the outcome as marking "a new era of justice."

"Abusers everywhere and the powerful forces that protect them should be on notice: There's no going back," it said in a statement.

Manhattan's top prosecutor Cyrus Vance praised the women who testified against Weinstein as having changed "the course of history."

"This is the new landscape

for sexual violence survivors. This is a new day," Vance told reporters outside the New York courthouse.

"We all owe an immense debt to you, who had the courage beyond measure to speak your story to the world, to the courtroom, at great personal risk, and in great personal pain."

'Public service'

More than 80 women have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct since allegations against him ignited a global reckoning against men abusing positions of power in October 2017.

But with many claims too old to prosecute, the jury considered charges related to just two: ex-actress Jessica Mann and former production assistant Mimi Haley.

The predatory sexual assault charges included testimony from "The Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra, who said Weinstein raped her in her New York apartment in the winter of 1993-94.

Six women took the stand to

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say they had been sexually assaulted by Weinstein.

They were subjected to ferocious cross-examination as Weinstein's defense team argued that his relationships were consensual and transactional.

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The state's case instead rested on asking the jury to believe the women.

Ashley Judd, who has said Weinstein destroyed her film career after she rejected his sexual advances, tweeted thanks after the verdict dropped.

"For the women who testified in this case, and walked through traumatic hell, you did a public service to girls and women everywhere, thank you," she said.

Next step, LA

Weinstein, who has always said his sexual relations were consensual, was charged with raping former actress Mann in the DoubleTree hotel in midtown Manhattan in 2013.

He was also charged with forcing oral sex on former production assistant Haley at his New York apartment in July 2006 while she was on her period.

The charges of predatory sexual assault, a serious sex crime committed against more than one person, were the most grave and carried a sentence of life in

prison.

For the jury to convict Weinstein of that they would have had to believe either Mann or Haley plus Sciorra.

Sciorra's allegation was too old to be prosecuted as an individual crime but she was included in the indictment to bolster the predatory sexual assault charge.

Sciorra said in a statement Monday that her testimony had been "painful but necessary," according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Ex-model Lauren Young told the court Weinstein sexually assaulted her in the bathroom of a Beverly Hills hotel room in 2013 when she was a 22-year-old aspiring actress.

Eyes now turn to Los Angeles, where Young's allegations form part of a separate sex crimes investigation against Weinstein being carried out by prosecutors in the California city.

They accuse him of raping an Italian model in February 2013 and of assaulting Young the following night.

Italian hikers rescued in Alaska after visiting infamous bus

AP | Anchorage, Alaska

An Italian man suffering from frostbite and four other tourists were rescued in the Alaska wilderness after visiting an abandoned bus that has become a lure for adventurers since it was featured in the "Into the Wild" book and movie.

Alaska State Troopers say the five Italians were rescued Saturday from a camp they set up after visiting the dilapidated bus on the Stampede Trail near the interior town of Healy.

The hikers were found 13 miles from the trailhead, Trooper spokesman Tim DeSpain said. He didn't know how far they were from the bus.

One of the hikers had frostbite to his feet and was transport-



Hikers take a break at Bus 142 on the Stampede Trail. (Representative picture)

ed to Fairbanks for treatment, injuries are not considered DeSpain said. The hiker's

life-threatening. The other four hikers were picked up by friends in Healy.

Rescuers were alerted by the hikers with a satellite-based emergency device that notified the International Emergency Response Coordination Center of a medical emergency, troopers said. That international group then notified rescuers, who reached the site by snowmobile, DeSpain said.

The rescue was the latest episode involving the bus, first made famous by Jon Krakauer's book published in 1996 and then by Sean Penn's 2007 film of the same name. Both fueled a lingering mystique about a young idealist, Christopher McCandless, who

met his death from starvation in the bus, which is about 10 miles north of the entrance to Denali National Park and Preserve.

Over the years, some hikers have been rescued and others have died while trying to retrace McCandless' last steps.

In July, a newlywed woman from Belarus died after she was swept away by the Teklanika River while trying to reach the bus with her husband.

In 2013, three German hikers trying to reach the bus were rescued after a river they crossed became impassable because of high, fast-moving water.

Families of some of those who died are now behind a proposal before Denali Borough for a feasibility study for construction of

a footbridge over the Teklanika.

The idea is in the early stages, and no decision has been made. But borough Mayor Clay Walker said there are several concerns among officials. A footbridge might give people a false sense of security. It could lead to more people trying to reach the bus, and that could lead to more rescues, Walker said.

There are more hazards in the unforgiving wilderness surrounding the bus, as Saturday's rescue illustrates.

"A footbridge wouldn't have changed the need for a rescue," Walker said. As far as he's concerned, a better solution would be to remove the bus. "The fact that the bus is there raises that attraction level," he said.



Fairbanks City Transit System Bus 142 is an abandoned 1946 International Harvester K-5 that is parked in a clearing along the Stampede Trail near Denali National Park.



It was originally one of a few buses used by the Yutan Construction Company to provide remote accommodations for the construction crew from Fairbanks that worked on road upgrades in 1960-1961.

The bus engine was removed and it was instead towed by Caterpillar D8 bulldozers. It contained beds and a wood-burning stove, which still remain today.

When the Stampede Mine ceased operations in the 1970s, all but this one bus were removed from the trail.