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Russian Women Speak Out After Harvey Weinstein Scandal

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Sexual harassment allegations against disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein are shedding light on violence against women in Russia.

Miss Russia 2017 runner-up Ksenia Alexandrova said recently that there is no problem with sexual harassment in Russia. "And for that we have to thank Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and his policy."

Related article: Miss Russia Thanks Putin for Lack of Weinstein-Style Harassment in Russia

Her comments attracted little attention in the Russian-speaking world but raised eyebrows outside the country.

On Monday, The Daily Beast news website shared the stories of two Moscow theater and movie actresses who were abused by directors 20 years and 30 years their senior.

An actress named Xenia described a job interview with a famous director whose name she did not disclose.

“He closed the door and told me to take off all my clothes,” Xenia said of the encounter during her theater school years.

When she asked why, he kicked her out and yelled that he’s disinterested in actresses “who ask questions instead of doing what they were told.”

Actor Anna Pukhova described two instances where she turned down advances at the cost of job opportunities.

“All my life, since school, I’ve heard that the bed opens doors in theater, but I refused to believe that such a disgraceful thing could be true,” she said.

Former Bolshoi ballerina Anastasia Volochkova told The Daily Beast that she had attended “gala nights” for ballerinas and Russian oligarchs during her career.

The outlet unearthed Volochkova's 2013 TV interview in which she alleged that the Bolshoi director had “turned Bolshoi into a giant brothel.”

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In the interview, Volochkova said an unnamed famous Bolshoi administrator would threaten the ballerinas’ jobs if they declined to attend the events.

The Daily Beast corroborated the after-performance parties that took place in London and Dubai from interviews with Bolshoi ballerinas.

The outlet recounted at least one instance where a Bolshoi soloist rebuffed a Russian oligarch at a London party but did not end up losing her job.

The Daily Beast shared a common joke among young actresses that is only second to the Russian saying “If he beats you, it means he loves you.”

The joke is an exchange between two budding actresses, with one asking another about her rehearsal.

“It went well,” the actress responds. “But Iosif complained about my feet being too cold."

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