

Uber Sexual Harassment Allegations are a Warning for Tech Industry and 'Rock Star' Culture

Uber Chief Executive Travis Kalanick said in a memo to employees that allegations from a former employee that she'd been sexually harassed at work, and that the company's human resources department tried to cover it up was the first he'd heard of the incident. But two groups weren't surprised, according to a report in *The Los Angeles Times*: women who work in tech, and Silicon Valley employment attorneys such as Kelly Dermody.

"There's a phenomenon that happens in several industries, namely tech and financial services, where there's a buffer around the men who are considered 'high contributors,' " said Dermody, who has represented hundreds of women who work in the tech sector in gender discrimination cases. "They get to have a different set of standards, and their business success translates into them being above the law of the companies."

Susan Fowler, the former Uber engineer who made the allegations, joined Uber as a site reliability engineer in November 2015. She claims that her manager at the time propositioned her, but Uber's HR team told her it was the man's first offense, so "they wouldn't feel comfortable giving him anything other than a warning and a stern talking-to." They also told her the manager "was a high performer," writes reporter Tracey Lien.

Read the *LA Times* article.

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