

In hospitality industry, sexual misconduct often part of job

By Don Babwin, AP

CHICAGO — One woman recalls how a general manager at a Chicago-area restaurant where she worked told her that if security cameras recorded him reaching between her legs and grabbing her genitals he could simply “edit that out.”

Another woman worked at an Atlanta restaurant and says her boss did nothing when two dishwashers kept making vulgar comments, so she quit wearing makeup to look less attractive and hopefully end the verbal abuse.

In the wake of sexual misconduct allegations against several prominent men in entertainment, politics and journalism, accounts like the ones these women share quietly play out in restaurants, bars and hotels across the country and rarely get the headlines. Court documents and interviews with the women and experts on the topic show hospitality industry workers are routinely subjected to sexual abuse and harassment from bosses, co-workers and customers that are largely unchecked. The nature of the work, which often has employees relying on tips, can make them especially vulnerable to abuse.

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