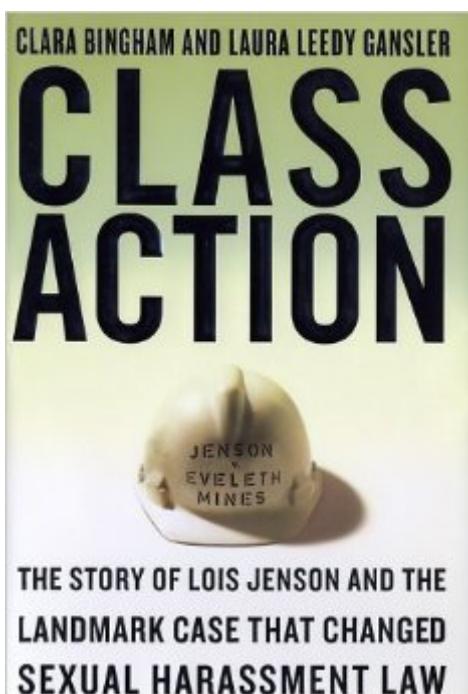


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Class Action: The Story Of Lois Jenson And The Landmark Case That Changed Sexual Harassment Law



Synopsis

In the tradition of *A Civil Action* and *Erin Brockovich*, *Class Action* is a story of intrigue and injustice as dramatic as fiction but all the more poignant because it is true. In the coldest reaches of northern Minnesota, a group of women endured a shocking degree of sexual harassment "until one of them stepped forward and sued the company that had turned a blind eye to their pleas for help. *Jenson vs. Eveleth Mines*, the first sexual harassment class action in America, permanently changed the legal landscape as well as the lives of the women who fought the battle. In 1975, Lois Jenson, a single mother on welfare, heard that the local iron mine was now hiring women. The hours were grueling, but the pay was astonishing, and Jenson didn't think twice before accepting a job cleaning viscous soot from enormous grinding machines. What she hadn't considered was that she was now entering a male-dominated, hard-drinking society that firmly believed that women belonged at home "a sentiment quickly born out in the relentless, brutal harassment of every woman who worked at the mine. When a group of men whistled at her walking into the plant, she didn't think much of it; when they began yelling obscenities at her, she was resilient; when one of them began stalking her, she got mad; when the mining company was unwilling to come to her defense, she got even. From Jenson's first day on the job, through three intensely humiliating trials, to the emotional day of the settlement, it would take Jenson twenty-five years and most of her physical and mental health to fight the battle with the mining company. But with the support of other women miners like union official Patricia Kosmach and her luck at finding perhaps the finest legal team for class action law, Jenson would eventually prevail. Clara Bingham and Laura Leedy Gansler take readers on a fascinating, page-turning journey, the roller-coaster ride that became *Jenson vs. Eveleth* and show us that *Class Action* is not just one woman's story, it's every woman's legacy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like some other reviewers I came across this book after seeing the movie North Country. The movie though is just good entertainment pulling at the heartstrings and very loosely based on the legal problems of single mother Lois Jenson. The book, I'm pleased to say, is much more gripping and will keep you turning the pages until the end. I thought it raised various issues like: *Why did the legal aspects of this case take from 1984 until a settlement in 1998? In 1997 a judgement from the Eighth Circuit court commented on the 'inordinate delay' and that it simply was not possible for the parties to get justice 'when a final outcome is issued more than ten years' after the case was filed and more than fifteen years since Lois started her class action. *Why did the mineworkers union maintain such a male chauvinist view towards its female members? I always assumed that Minnesota folk, historically populated by hard working European immigrants in a hostile physical environment would have been much more sympathetic to the sexual harassment that went on year after year in the mines. In fact very few males come out of this story with much credibility, from the mine management down to the union, they are really shown to be sexist and ultra conservative when females start to (legally) work in their domain. *Why did it take so long for the mines main insurance company, who were going to be the ultimate payers of any compensation, to get to grips with the case? When they did get closely involved in 1998 the problems seemed to evaporate and the ladies got their money. The authors write in a simple straightforward style fortunately avoiding flowery generalisations that seem a staple of non-fiction writing.

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