## Fox News host called female employees 's\*\*ts' and 'w\*\*\*es', lawsuit claims

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Kathleen Lee says she was subject to 'unrelenting sexual harassment' at the hands of her coworker



Protestors rally outside Fox News offices in New York in the wake of sexual harassment allegations Drew Angerer/Getty Images

A former news anchor at Fox News Radio has been accused of subjecting a colleague to years "unrelenting sexual harassment", in new lawsuit.

Kathleen Lee, a shift editor at the station, alleges that Ron Flatter, began harassing her shortly after he was hired in 2012.

In legal filings, posted at Manhattan Federal Court earlier this week, Mr Flatter is accused of openly referring to female workers, including Ms Lee, as "sluts and "whores".

Ms Lee, who was born with heart conditions, one kidney and a rare genetic disease that resulted in scoliosis, also claimed that Mr Flatter regularly called her an "invalid" and referred to her as "Leak-y" in front of fellow employees.

The legal filing also claims that he specifically targeted her by using his "silly girl voice," and repeatedly referred to her as his co-worker's "girl."

Mr Flatter, who now works for the Las Vegas-based VSiN sports radio, did not respond to request for comment.

But the latest legal filing follows a series of allegations against high profile Fox News employees.

Before his death earlier this month, the station's founder Roger Ailes was the subject of a number of sexual harassment claims.

High profile host Fox News host Bill O'Reilly also had his employment terminated after the disclosure of a series of sexual harassment allegations against him and an internal investigation that turned up even more.

## Fox News 'finest moments'

Ms Lee claims she reported Mr Flatter's behaviour shortly after it began. But despite her numerous complaints, Fox News Radio Vice President Mitch Davis reportedly discouraged Ms Lee from reporting them to Human Resources.

Instead, Mr Davis allegedly said the "Flatter problem" would need to be dealt with "internally".

Ms Lee says she decided to defy her boss and report Mr Flatter, but it took Human Resources Manager Denise Collins, four weeks to set up a meeting with Mr Flatter – after which she claims his behaviour did not change.

As a result she contends that she did not feel safe at work until more than a year after she first reported his behaviour.

At this point, Ms Lee had emailed Executive Vice President of Business and Legal Affairs Dianne Brandi, telling her she had "deepening concerns about my situation here".

"Before contacting outside counsel, I would truly like to speak to someone," she wrote. "The treatment towards me by my direct supervisors has changed significantly ... it is now unrecognisable."

Days before, Mr Flatter had reportedly screamed at her so loudly that co-workers felt the need to escort her out of the building to ensure her safety. Fox News later agreed to adjust her shifts to avoid Mr Flatter.

It was only after Mr Flatter "physically threatened Ms Lee a second time" that Fox told him "to cease working," the legal papers state.

"Shamelessly, Fox continued to pay Mr. Flatter the remainder of his contract," according to the lawsuit.

Meanwhile, Lee was subjected to "unceasing retaliation that continues through the present."

This brings the number of former Fox News employees who have accused the right-wing cable network of "Plantantion-style management" to 23, said attorney Donald Wigdor, who represents them all.

Ms Lee is now suing Mr Davis, Ms Collins, Twenty-First Century Fox, and others for gender discrimination.

"Davis and other senior Fox executives allowed a misogynistic culture to run rampant through Fox News Radio," her lawyers contend. "Ms. Lee intends to hold Fox, and her individual managers, accountable for the senseless and unlawful discrimination she has suffered."

Fox News told *The Independent* that the latest claims are "without legal basis," and said the company "looks forward to proving that Fox News at all times has acted appropriately, and lawfully, in connection with these matters."

In the last year, Fox News' parent company, 21st Century Fox has paid out \$45m (£36m) to settle sexual harassment claims.

Fox News Co-President Bill Shine resigned this month under mounting pressure.

But Fox News Channel Chairman Rupert Murdoch has told employees he has "full confidence that the network will continue to be a powerhouse in cable news".

"Most importantly," he wrote in an internal memo, "we want to underscore our consistent commitment to fostering a work environment built on the values of trust and respect."