

Fox News Spent \$10 Million To Settle 18 Discrimination, Harassment Lawsuits

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Vaishnavi Vaidyanathan

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The 21st Century Fox on Tuesday reached a roughly \$10 million settlement to resolve a group of racial and gender discrimination lawsuits involving 18 current and former employees that has been haunting them since 2016.

The settlements include a racial discrimination lawsuit filed by anchor Kelly Wright, who was the only black male anchor at the network and several employees in the accounting department of Fox News last year. Their lawsuit claims that despite repeatedly complaining about unlawful and hostile racial discrimination to network executives, the inappropriate behavior continued, according to the New York Times.

"The parties have reached mutual agreements that resolve various cases involving Fox News employees," Fox News confirmed in a statement to the Hollywood Reporter.

The settlement also includes a gender discrimination lawsuit filed by a Fox News Radio reporter and a race, gender and pregnancy discrimination lawsuit filed by a former reporter of Fox 5.

The terms of the settlement include requiring the employees drop all their claims, leave the network and not seek future employment in the organization. The deal does not bar the employees from telling their own stories, but, forbids them from disclosing other company information, including the compensation and settlement amount paid.

Several lawsuits, including political commentator Scottie Nell Hughes' lawsuit that claims she was raped by anchor Charles Payne and a defamation and racial-discrimination lawsuit that focused on an article about the death of Seth Rich, a young aide for the Democratic National Committee, were not included in the settlement and remain outstanding.

The settlement represents the company's push to move past the negative attention drawn by harassment and discrimination claims. These scandals led to a lot of changes in the top brass of the company including the ousting of Roger Ailes, the founding chairman of the network and Bill O'Reilly.

The scandal came into light in 2016 when former anchor Gretchen Carlson sued Ailes for sexual harassment. This led to the ouster of Ailes. Carlson received a settlement of \$20 million after which several others, including co-host of "Fox and Friends Weekend" Kelly Wright, came forward with claims of discrimination and harassment. Wright claimed he was demeaned and stopped from advancing in his career due to racial bias.

The 21st Century Fox incurred about \$50 million in costs by the end of June 2017, that were linked to settlements of discrimination and sexual harassment allegations at Fox News.

Most of the lawsuits, including a discrimination suit in a federal court from local TV reporter Lidia Curanaj, and lawsuits from dozens of women claiming the network fosters a hostile environment for dark skinned people were handled by Douglas Widgor, who has been a critic of what he calls a systemic culture of discrimination at Fox News. He said he was at war with Fox news. The settlement by Fox is far lesser than the \$60 million agreement that he had proposed last summer.