Wigdor LLP Represents Former Digital Editor-in-chief of the NY Post in Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

January 20, 2022 • News & Press

On January 18, 2022, Wigdor LLP filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York on behalf of Michelle Gotthelf against News Corporation, NYP Holdings, Inc. (together, "NY Post"), Keith Poole and Col Allan.

The lawsuit states that in the fall of 2015, Col Allan, then NY Post's Editor-in-Chief, sexually propositioned Ms. Gotthelf — the culmination of years of sex-based harassment and abuse. As alleged, when Ms. Gotthelf finally complained about the harassment, Mr. Allan was forced to resign in disgrace. However, the NY Post and Rupert Murdoch did everything they could to protect Mr. Allan's reputation, giving him a rousing send-off while claiming he had decided to "retire," according to the Complaint. Ms. Gotthelf was offered the title of Managing Editor.

In retaliation for her complaints, Ms. Gotthelf's responsibilities and authority were steadily eroded, often in favor of substantially less qualified men, as alleged. Ms. Gotthelf continued to complain about retaliation and discrimination, but these complaints were largely met with indifference, and in one instance she was told to "stop complaining," as set forth in the Complaint.

In early 2019, NY Post rehired Mr. Allan. The lawsuit states, Ms. Gotthelf was falsely told that her harasser would only be a "consultant" and promised that "under no circumstances" would she have to report to him. In fact, Mr. Allan became a de facto supervisor, often giving Ms. Gotthelf directions, such as to "get rid of" a story reporting rape allegations against then President Donald Trump made by former Elle columnist E. Jean Carroll, as alleged.

As alleged, in early 2021, the Company effectively demoted Ms. Gotthelf, hiring Keith Poole to be her new boss. As alleged, Mr. Poole, who had spent weeks being "briefed" by Mr. Allan, probed Ms. Gotthelf about what happened between her and Mr. Allan. In November 2021, Ms. Gotthelf revealed to Mr. Poole that Mr. Allan sexually harassed her, specifically propositioning her for sex, as set forth in the Complaint.

Mr. Poole fired Ms. Gotthelf on January 12, 2022, only two months later, ending her twenty-plus year career at the Company.

> BREAKING: we filed a wrongful termination lawsuit on behalf of Michelle Gotthelf, former Digital Editor-in-Chief of @nypost.
> Ms. Gotthelf alleges she was sexually harassed by former EIC Col Allan & fired after she complained about it.
> Read the complaint: https://t.co/sC7z4oEKyt pic.twitter.com/4glYBqfa8l

> — Wigdor LLP (@WigdorLaw) January 18, 2022

Ms. Gotthelf is represented by Wigdor LLP Founding Partner Douglas H. Wigdor and Partner Valdi Licul.

Statement from Douglas H. Wigdor, Founding Partner at Wigdor LLP:

> "The New York Post's unlawful treatment of its top female editor after twenty-plus years of service is nothing short of appalling. Moreover, the Post's decision to rehire Col Allan after he sexually propositioned Ms. Gotthelf speaks volumes about exactly the type of newsroom News Corp is running. We intend to aggressively move forward with holding the Post accountable and protecting Ms. Gotthelf's rights."

Statement from Michelle Gotthelf:

> "For more than two decades, I took great pride in my work shaping coverage at one of the most widely read news organizations in the country. While I never intended to become the news, the truth of what happened to me deserves to be heard. I will miss my colleagues dearly and hope that by speaking out there can be positive change for other women at the Post."

Read the Full Complaint Here

Adweek
"Top Editor Files Discrimination Suit Against New York Post"
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The Associate Press
"Former New York Post editor alleges harassment, retaliation"
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Axios
"Ex-N.Y. Post digital chief files lawsuit alleging sexual harassment"

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Bloomberg
"New York Post Hit With Harassment Claim Against Former Chief"
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Business Insider
"New York Post's former digital editor in chief accuses former boss of propositioning her for sex in a new lawsuit"
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Business Insider
"Former New York Post Digital Editor in chief says she went forward with sexual harassment lawsuit to inspire a younger generation to not stay silent"
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CNN
"Former New York Post digital chief alleges wrongful firing after privately reporting longtime Murdoch lieutenant propositioned her for sex"
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Daily Beast
"Ex-Editor Scorches NY Post in Shocking Sexual Harassment Lawsuit'"
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Deadline
"Former Editor Files Discrimination and Retaliation Lawsuit Against New York Post"
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Financial Times
"Former New York Post editor claims harassment in News Corp lawsuit"

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Forbes
"Ex-New York Post Editor Sues For 'Years Of Sex-Based Harassment'"
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The Guardian
"Former NY Post editor sues News Corp and Col Allan, alleging sexual harassment"
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LA Times
"Former New York Post digital editor sues Rupert Murdoch's News Corp."
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Law and Crime
"Federal Lawsuit Accuses New York Post, Former and Current Editors-in-Chief of Sexual Harassment and Retaliation"
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Law360
"Ex-NY Post Editor Loved Belittling Women, Sex Bias Suit Says"
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Mediaite
"Fired NY Post Editor Says Boss Sexually Harassed Her, Was Verbally Abusive, and Demanded She Delete a Negative Story About Trump"
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NPR
"Ex-'New York Post' editor sues tabloid, alleging sexual harassment by Murdoch favorite"
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New York Daily News
"Former New York Post editor-in-chief Col Allan sexually harassed and propositioned employee: suit"
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New York Magazine
"The New York Post Gets Its Own Tabloid Scandal"
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The New York Times
"Editor files discrimination suit against The New York Post"
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NYC Patch
"Ex-NY Post Editor-In-Chief Accused Of Sexually Harassing Staffer"
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New York Law Journal
"In Retaliatory Dismissal Lawsuit, Ex-New York Post Editor Says Former Boss Propositioned Her for Sex"
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Reuters
"Ex-NY Post editor sues News Corp, says she was fired after reporting sexual harassment"
January 18, 2022
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Rolling Stone
"Ousted 'New York Post' Editor Says She Was Propositioned For Sex, Fired for Reporting It"
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TheWrap
"Former NY Post Digital Boss Sues for Sexual Harassment, Retaliation for Complaint About Ex-Top Editor

Col Allan"
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The Washington Examiner
"Former New York Post editor files discrimination and sexual harassment lawsuit"
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The Washington Post
"New York Post sued by former editor alleging harassment by top Murdoch lieutenant Col Allan"
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The Wall Street Journal
"Former Digital Editor Files Discrimination Suit Against New York Post"
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