

## Fox News Anchor Joins Lawsuit Accusing Network Of Racial Discrimination

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**NEW YORK (CBSNewYork/AP)** — An expanded lawsuit accuses Fox News Channel of racial discrimination “that appears more akin to Plantation-style management than a modern-day work environment.”

The lawsuit, filed in state Supreme Court Tuesday, adds eight former and current Fox employees to a case involving three former Fox workers and their accusations against a since-fired Fox financial executive. It also expands the case to include Dianne Brandi, Fox’s chief counsel.

Fox News said it vehemently denies the allegations, calling them “copycat complaints.” The network also said Brandi denies the claims against her.

Kelly Wright, an anchor and reporter for Fox News, joined the class action suit, saying he could no longer sit in silence. He said he’d been effectively sidelined and asked to perform the role of a Jim Crow, an insulting slang term to refer to a black man, according to the lawsuit. Wright said the recently-fired host Bill O’Reilly refused to show a piece Wright had prepared after racial protests in Ferguson, Missouri, because they showed blacks in too positive a light.

“Behind closed doors I found myself confronted with race, albeit in a more subtle but in a demeaning way, and marginalizing my growth and my development,” Wright said during a news conference Wednesday.

Wright said he joined the lawsuit because he doesn’t want future employees to endure the same.

“I want to make it possible for whoever fills my shoes, that next generation, to never go through this,” Wright said. “I do have a right to stand up for justice.”

The original lawsuit was filed in late March by two black women who worked in the network’s payroll department, and a third colleague later joined it. The expanded lawsuit, incorporating the other employees, seeks unspecified compensatory damages and an elimination of unlawful employment practices at Fox.

The workers allege that their complaints about the actions of Judith Slater, the fired former comptroller, went unanswered for years. They say Brandi told them it was because Slater “knew too much” about former Fox Chairman Roger Ailes and O’Reilly, who have been ousted over the past year because of sexual-harassment accusations, according to the lawsuit.

A lawyer for Slater, Catherine Foti, said the actions against Slater are meritless and frivolous. She said “all claims of racial discrimination against Ms. Slater are completely false.”

A former employee, Musfiq Rahman, a Bangladeshi, said he was punished after mistakenly walking into Ailes’ office by no longer being allowed on Ailes’ floor without an escort.

Mark LeGrier, a former financial employee who’s black, said he was subjected to retaliation when he complained to Brandi about Slater’s behavior.

“When it comes to racial discrimination, 21st Century Fox has been operating as if it should be called 18th Century Fox,” said Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer for the plaintiffs.

Meanwhile, Nielsen company ratings showed that Tucker Carlson moved into O'Reilly's old time slot at Fox News on Monday night and took over his status as the most-watched host in cable news — at least for a night.

O'Reilly, who hosted "The O'Reilly Factor," was fired by Fox last week following news about Fox settling sexual-harassment cases involving him for millions of dollars. He has denied the allegations.

Nielsen said Carlson's first night at 8 p.m. attracted 3.17 million viewers, beating the combined audience of MSNBC's Chris Hayes, who reached 1.52 million viewers, and CNN's Anderson Cooper, who reached 1 million.

Carlson did not beat O'Reilly's nearly 4 million average during the first three months of the year. Carlson had averaged 3.3 million in the 9 p.m. time slot following O'Reilly.

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