

# Rupert Murdoch explains the sickness of Fox News

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By Erik Wemple The Washington Post

Attorney Douglas Wigdor told CNN's Brian Stelter that his law firm is busy with folks who claim to have been mistreated at Fox News. "Every day we get contacted by people of color at Fox and women at Fox who've been either discriminated against based on their race or gender. In the coming days and the coming weeks, we will be filing new actions and bringing forth new actions – that I can guarantee you," said Wigdor.

Spreadsheets are becoming necessary: Whether it's Gretchen Carlson, Andrea Tantaros, Julie Roginsky, Diana Falzone, a group of 10-plus complainants alleging racial discrimination or a radio correspondent, the word is out that now is the time to file your grievances against this organization. And those are just the publicly filed claims – who knows how many hush-hush settlements and arbitration proceedings have concluded in the haze of secrecy?

The public knows about the fallout. Roger Ailes, the founding network boss, was ousted last summer after Carlson's July suit, an event that triggered many other women to come forward with similar accounts. Bill O'Reilly left just last month, after the New York Times reported that he'd tallied five settlements for sexual harassment.

Bill Shine, who was promoted to co-president after Ailes' departure, parted ways with Fox News just last week, a casualty of excessive proximity to the 20-year excesses of Ailes & Co. This entire record of harassment, concealment and misery is finding its way into the offices of Ofcom, the British media regulator now considering the attempt of 21st Century Fox – Rupert Murdoch's media-entertainment empire, which includes Fox News – to purchase the remaining 61 percent of Sky that it doesn't already own.

Asked by the BBC on Monday about the Fox News situation, Murdoch himself responded, "Fox News is getting record ratings, and so I'm not worried at all. Nothing's happening at Fox News. Nothing, OK?"

That, right there – the first six words of his statement – is the very mentality that got Fox News into this mess to begin with. For a decade and a half, Fox News ruled the ratings through bad journalism and bad management. Though pressures from the litigation, advertisers and the public have forced some personnel changes, what incentive is there to change the rotten product? Despite on-air embarrassment after on-air embarrassment, the answer to the question has been not much.