

# New Fox News Lawsuits Allege Discrimination, Physical Threats Against Employees

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By Ronn  
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Two more lawsuits alleging discriminatory behavior by Fox News leadership were filed on Monday, claiming that employees were the target of actions including discriminatory remarks, physical threats, retaliation, and gender-based termination.

One lawsuit claims that Fox News Radio Shift Editor **Kathleen Lee** was the target of sexist treatment by radio anchor **Ron Flatter**. Lee alleges that, among other sexist remarks, Flatter called her and other women “slut” and “whore,” and referred to a female anchor as the “Title 9 Anchor.”

In 2013, Lee allegedly reported harassment by Flatter to Fox News Radio executives **Mitch Davis** and **Bernie Pigott**, who allegedly told her to “deal with it,” essentially ignoring her complaint. Lee’s lawsuit says that not only did Flatter continue the treatment, he behaved in ways that were physically intimidating to her, including screaming at her while inches from her face.

Lee also describes an incident with another radio anchor, **Bill Vitka**, where he allegedly said to her, “You can’t answer my question because you are eating a sandwich. I hope you choke to death and answer my fucking question first.”

After another employee reported Vitka’s statement to Davis, Davis allegedly did nothing. The next day, Vitka allegedly “grabbed Ms. Lee by the arm, forced her away from others and berated her again.” Vitka allegedly never faced any consequences for this.

Lee claims that she reported the actions to Fox General Counsel **Dianne Brandi** and human resources executive **Denise Collins**, only for them to ignore her as well.

It was only after an instance in July 2015 that Fox removed Flatter: He allegedly screamed at Lee, inches from her face, prompting male employees to step in and get Lee away. They allegedly continued to pay him. Despite taking action against Flatter, however, Lee claims that Fox then began retaliating against her by micromanaging her and

subjecting her to “repeated criticism and scrutiny.” While coworkers would regularly arrive to work up to 45 minutes late without consequence, Lee claims that once she showed up 15 minutes late, only to be chastised in front of the newsroom.

Weeks after Flatter left Fox, Lee says she received her first negative performance review, after positive reviews for more than 10 years.

Lee claims that by not taking significant actions to curtail discriminatory behavior, Fox encouraged it to continue.

“Fox does nothing to curb the unlawful behavior,” the complaint says. “Worse, when female employees dare report such conduct, Fox victimizes them a second time – by subjecting them to escalated sex bias, retaliation, or both.” The lawsuit names Fox News, 21st Century Fox, Davis, Collins, and Lee’s supervisor, Fox News Radio Director of News Programming **Hank Weinbloom**.

In another lawsuit filed on Monday, **Naima Farrow**, who was an Accounts Payable Coordinator for Fox News from 2014 to 2015, claims that she was fired “without any warning or explanation,” after telling her supervisor, **Kim Jacobson**, that she was pregnant. Immediately after informing Jacobson of the news, Jacobson allegedly told a male employee that “he had better be prepared to take over Ms. Farrow’s position by the end of the week,” and that less than 72 hours later, Farrow was terminated.

Farrow, who is black, also alleges that she dealt with a hostile work environment due to racial comments by former network Controller **Judith Slater**. Slater, who is the subject of several other Fox News employees in separate legal action, allegedly engaged in discriminatory conduct that included a mocking impression of a black woman, where she would greet Farrow by saying, “Hey, girlfriend.” This lawsuit is against Fox News, 21st Century Fox, Slater and Jacobson.

In addition to the new lawsuits, **Vidya Mann**, a dark-skinned Guyanese woman who began working for Fox through an employment agency in 2009, joined an existing lawsuit against 21st Century Fox and Fox News, where she alleges racial and gender discrimination. Mann claims that for years she would seek status as a permanent employee, which would grant her health benefits, only for her to be told, “hang in there,” while white applicants would get permanent positions. Mann also alleges that she too was the target of racially insensitive comments by Slater, and that she was terminated soon after giving birth.

In a statement, attorneys **Douglas Wigdor** and **Jeanne Christensen** said:

*[D]espite public relations efforts to the contrary, business at 21st Century Fox continues to operate more akin to 18th Century Fox. It has, and continues to be, our hope that 21st Century Fox will recognize its failures and take prompt remedial action to ensure that other employees are not discriminated against, harassed, and/or retaliated.”*

This makes 23 current and former Fox News employees that Wigdor’s firm is representing in lawsuits against Fox. Wigdor also sent a letter on Monday to Ofcom, the British regulatory body that is overseeing 21st Century Fox’s attempt to acquire Sky Network. Ofcom determines whether or not companies should be granted broadcast licenses, including deciding whether they are “fit and proper” to do so. Wigdor has contacted the body in the past and met with them in person to discuss a variety of allegations against Fox.

Monday’s letter, obtained by *LawNewz.com*, included details of the allegations brought by Lee, Farrow, and Mann, as well as allegations from a black employee that led to the termination of Fox News host **Bob Beckel**. The letter also discussed how two of Wigdor’s clients have confidentiality clauses that prohibit them from speaking with Ofcom. Wigdor says he sent letters to 21st Century Fox’s lawyers requesting that they remove the gag orders, but

that Fox refused, saying that they will provide additional information should Ofcom request it themselves.

A Fox News spokesperson said in a statement to *LawNewz.com*:

*We have consistently demonstrated that the Company is committed to a diverse workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, takes any complaint of discrimination seriously, and in these particular matters took prompt, effective and, where necessary, strong remedial action. We believe these latest claims are without legal basis and look forward to proving that the Company at all times has acted appropriately, and lawfully, in connection with these matters.*

*This article has been updated with Fox News' statement.*