

# Bob Beckel's racist outburst will result in lawsuit, attorney says

[wp.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2017/05/22/bob-beckels-racist-outburst-will-result-in-lawsuit-attorney-says/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2017/05/22/bob-beckels-racist-outburst-will-result-in-lawsuit-attorney-says/)

By Erik Wemple



Roger Ailes in New York on Feb. 9, 2015. (Charles Sykes/Invision via Associated Press)

It's one of the great ironies of the late Roger Ailes's Fox News: He used legal levers — arbitration clauses, nondisclosure clauses — to prevent details about the network's inner workings from leaking to the media. Yet these days — after Ailes's death last week and his ouster from Fox News last summer amid a sexual-harassment scandal — the legal system is coughing up a bulging file of scandalous allegations about the network as a workplace.

The trail started last summer, of course, with former host Gretchen Carlson's suit against Ailes for sexual harassment — a document that alleged outrageous behavior not only by Ailes [but also by](#) the host's former

colleague on the set of “Fox & Friends,” Steve Doocy. Ex-host Andrea Tantaros in August followed with a suit against Ailes and others; it included claims that now-former host Bill O’Reilly had made advances upon her. Contributor Julie Roginsky earlier this year made similar allegations, [charging that a promotion to the cast of the program “The Five”](#) was “contingent upon having a sexual relationship with Ailes.”

Where allegations of sexual harassment originate, so do other allegations. There’s a [racial discrimination suit](#) by more than 10 current and former Fox News employees alleging that former comptroller Judith Slater ran an operation drenched in racial stereotyping and nonstop insults. There’s a gender- and disability-discrimination suit filed by a FoxNews.com personality who claims that she suffered isolation and demotion after she wrote an essay about endometriosis, [which the Mayo Clinic defines](#) as “an often painful disorder in which tissue that normally lines the inside of your uterus — the endometrium — grows outside your uterus.”

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More paperwork is now headed in the direction of Fox News. Wigdor LLP, the firm representing plaintiffs in the racial-discrimination action, announced that it was filing three additional workplace suits against the network. In a disturbing chain of allegations, Kathleen Lee, a shift editor at Fox News Radio, claims that she was mistreated by an anchor at the outlet, Ron Flatter. According to the suit, Flatter referred to Hillary Clinton as Hillary “Clit-on,” called Lee an “invalid” (Lee has a genetic disorder that limits flexibility in her neck and right shoulder) and shouted in her face in a threatening manner. Though Lee sent numerous complaints to her immediate and no-so-immediate supervisors, they failed to take action on her situation. It wasn’t until July 2015 — after co-workers had to step in as Flatter allegedly screamed at Lee — that management acted. It told Lee that Flatter would be leaving the organization.

Earlier this month, Wigdor filed suit against Fox on behalf of [Jessica Golloher](#), a Fox News Radio correspondent who alleged gender discrimination in the allotment of reporting assignments, among other transgressions. The suit condemned the conduct of Fox News Radio executive Mitch Davis; in a press release, Wigdor LLP says that Davis has subsequently announced his intention to retire.

On other fronts, Wigdor has filed a suit claiming that Naima Farrow, who is black, was fired within days of telling her supervisors that she was pregnant. Farrow was also subjected to the allegedly discriminatory treatment of Slater, according to the suit. And Vidya Mann, who Wigdor characterizes as “brown-skinned and Guyanese,” joined a previous lawsuit to pursue her claim that Fox News failed to offer her a “permanent” position — she was originally hired in 2009 as a contractor — even though the company did likewise for white workers. Mann, says the complaint, was terminated after becoming pregnant and giving birth.

Fox News sent along this rebuttal to the actions: “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.”

Now for the events of last Friday. Fox News issued a statement indicating that a worker was fired from the company under offensive circumstances. “Bob Beckel was terminated today for making an insensitive remark to an African-American employee,” said a Fox News spokeswoman. As it turned out, Beckel left his office when a black information-technology worker came in to work on his computer. He told the worker that he was bolting because he was black, according to the Wigdor firm. Though Wigdor and Co. allege that Fox News’s human-resources department attempted to persuade the worker to drop his complaint, [Fox News heatedly disputes the contention](#). In any case, the worker is a client of Wigdor LLP.

Asked whether the situation will lead to a legal filing, founding partner Douglas Wigdor replied, “Yes.” He declined to

get specific on the nature of the claim.

“It is a long road,” Wigdor told this blog in an email. “I am confident that there will be more filings in due course.”

And all of this doesn't even consider the Justice Department's probe into the actions of the network [relating to various sexual-harassment settlements](#).