

Former New York Post editor alleges harassment, retaliation

AP apnews.com/article/business-nyc-state-wire-news-corp-newspapers-lawsuits-605e74b92600932936184a157e974ace

January 18, 2022

By DAVID BAUDERan hour ago

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York Post editor whose departure was announced Tuesday alleged she was fired two months after revealing to an executive that former editor Col Allan had sexually harassed her.

The Post said any suggestion of wrongdoing related to Editor-in-Chief Keith Poole's announcement of Michelle Gotthelf's exit was meritless.

Poole, who Gotthelf said fired her in November after more than two decades at the Post, is a defendant in a lawsuit she filed Tuesday, along with Allan, the newspaper's publishing company and corporate owner News Corp.

Gotthelf said Allan's harassment of her "peaked" in fall 2015 when she was the newspaper's metro editor. The two were having drinks after an editors' dinner meeting when Allan said that "we should sleep together," she said in the lawsuit.

She said Allan became hostile when she rejected his advances. She complained to her superiors and human resources, and alleged that Allan was forced to retire shortly thereafter.

He returned as a consultant in 2019, however. Gotthelf said their relationship remained tense, and she saw her influence and status in the newsroom erode. She said that in 2019, Allan ordered her to remove from the Post's website a story about journalist E. Jean Carroll's accusations that she had been raped by then-President Donald Trump. Trump denied the charges and the lawsuit said Allan claimed Carroll's charges were baseless.

During a lunch meeting in November 2021 to discuss a soon-to-expire contract, Gotthelf said Poole asked her "what happened between you and Col?" She told him Allan had propositioned her.

She said Poole fired her "without cause" on Jan. 12.

"Any suggestion of wrongdoing related to the management changes announced today is meritless," the Post and News Corp. said in a statement.

The Associated Press generally does not name people who say they're a victim of sexual harassment, unless they speak publicly, as Gotthelf has done.