

Ex-N.Y. Post digital chief files lawsuit alleging sexual harassment

[A axios.com/ex-new-york-post-editor-sexual-harassment-lawsuit-7a8b8169-bc6d-4a7d-8416-86fe97f9baa6.html](https://www.axios.com/ex-new-york-post-editor-sexual-harassment-lawsuit-7a8b8169-bc6d-4a7d-8416-86fe97f9baa6.html)

Former New York Post editor Michelle Gottself is suing her former employer, its parent company News Corp. and two editors, alleging she was reprimanded after complaining to senior executives that she was sexually harassed by retired N.Y. Post editor-in-chief Col Allan. The N.Y. Post issued a statement denying any wrongdoing.

Why it matters: "I felt that I owed it to myself and I owed it to the news organization and the people who answered to me," Gottself, who was a long-time editor at the N.Y. Post, told Axios in an interview.

"I have a number of young journalists under me wondering, 'What happened to their editor?'"

Details: The lawsuit, filed Tuesday, alleges that Allan propositioned Gottself, his then direct report, for sex, saying, "We should sleep together."

- Following prolonged verbal abuse and sexual advances, Gottself complained to the company's human resources department, per the complaint. Allan was forced to resign but was eventually brought back as a consultant a few years later.
- "I was told he was coming back and that I would not have to answer to him and that he would be in an advisory role only and that quickly became a lie," Gottself said. "I very quickly realized they were bringing him back to be the boss."

The complaint alleges Gottself's responsibilities and authority "were steadily eroded, often in favor of substantially less qualified men," after she came forward about the abuse. She also alleges that The Post and its owner Rupert Murdoch "did all they could to protect Mr. Allan's reputation."

- The company hired Keith Poole as its editor-in-chief in early 2021. The complaint says Gottself revealed to Poole that Allan propositioned her and she was fired two months later after 22 years at the Post.
- Gottself, who was editor-in-chief of the New York Post's digital operation, said she hadn't heard from Poole or Allan since filing the lawsuit.

What they're saying: In a response to the lawsuit, a New York Post and News Corp. spokesperson said, "Any suggestion of wrongdoing related to the management changes announced today is meritless."

- Allan could not immediately be reached for comment.

- Gotthelf's lawyer Douglas H. Wigdor said, "The New York Post's unlawful treatment of its top female editor after 20-plus years of service is nothing short of appalling," and that "we intend to aggressively move forward with holding the Post accountable and protecting Ms. Gotthelf's rights."
- On Tuesday, Poole acknowledged in a note to staff that "Michelle Gotthelf has departed The Post, effective January 15," and thanked her for tenure. He announced a slew of promotions, including her replacement.

Bottom line: "I think now it's up to them to change their ways," Gotthelf said. "And it goes right to the top of the company."