

New York Post Hit With Harassment Claim Against Former Chief

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By Ella Ceron Jan 18, 2022, UPDATED 1:32 PM EST

The top digital editor at the New York Post claimed in a lawsuit that her former boss, Col Allan, subjected her to sexual harassment for years and at one point propositioned her while he was running the News Corp. publication.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday in New York federal court by Michelle Gotthelf, claims the harassment continued even after Allan retired as editor in chief in 2016 and when he returned as a consultant who effectively supervised her. She said the Post brushed off her complaints about his behavior. Gotthelf says she told Keith Poole, who became editor-in-chief of the New York Post Group a year ago, about the harassment in November and that she was fired two months later.

The Post announced on Tuesday that Gotthelf had left the company Jan. 15. In a statement provided to Bloomberg, a spokesperson for the Post called the allegations "meritless."

"While I never intended to become the news, the truth of what happened to me deserves to be heard," Gotthelf, who had been digital editor in chief, said in a statement. "I will miss my colleagues dearly and hope that by speaking out there can be positive change for other women at the Post."

Gotthelf said that Allan, who had been rehired by the Post following his retirement, verbally denigrated women while in her presence, and at one point told her to "get the f--- out" while in front of male peers.

"The New York Post's unlawful treatment of its top female editor after twenty-plus years of service is nothing short of appalling," Gotthelf's lawyer, Douglas H. Wigdor, said. "Moreover, the Post's decision to rehire Col Allan after he sexually propositioned Ms. Gotthelf speaks volumes about exactly the type of newsroom News Corp is running."

News Corp, which was founded by Rupert Murdoch, owns companies including the Wall Street Journal's publisher Dow Jones, HarperCollins, and several news and media companies in the United Kingdom and Australia.

The case is Gotthelf v. News Corporation, 22-cv-00421, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York (Foley Square).