

# New York Post's former digital editor in chief accuses former boss of propositioning her for sex in a new lawsuit

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Rebecca Cohen 2 hours ago

- A former New York Post digital editor-in-chief accused a former editor-in-chief of sexual harassment.
- Michelle Gotthelf said in a lawsuit Col Allan propositioned her for sex after "years of sex-based harassment."
- Gotthelf said the Post fired her after demoting her. The Post said she "departed" the publication.

New York Post's former digital editor-in-chief Michelle Gotthelf accused her ex-boss, former editor-in-chief Col Allan, of propositioning her for sex in a new lawsuit.

Gotthelf accused Allan of "years of sex-based harassment," and said he became "more abusive" as she declined his advances, according to the lawsuit filed in federal court on Tuesday.

In her lawsuit — filed against Allan, current New York Post editor in chief Keith Poole, parent company News Corp, and holding company NYP Holdings — Gotthelf said she faced retaliation and discrimination after reporting her harassment accusations until she was ultimately fired. She's now seeking monetary damages for emotional distress and the loss of past and future income.

Allan and Poole did not immediately respond to Insider's requests for comment.

According to the lawsuit, Gotthelf first told colleagues Allan had sexually harassed her in 2015, when she said he asked her about her sex life and said, "We should sleep together," while they were grabbing drinks after work.

In April 2016, the Post announced that Allan was retiring. Gotthelf alleged in her lawsuit that he was forced to resign.

Gotthelf alleged in her lawsuit that the Post and News Corp Executive Chairman Rupert Murdoch "did all they could to protect Mr. Allan's reputation."

And following Allan's exit, Gotthelf was given the new position of managing editor, the lawsuit said.

"While Mr. Allan 'retired' and was given a rousing send off, Ms. Gotthelf's responsibilities and authority were steadily eroded, often in favor of substantially less qualified men," Gotthelf's lawsuit said. "Ms. Gotthelf's complaints about retaliation and discrimination were largely met with indifference and, in one instance, she was told to 'stop complaining.'"

Gotthelf said the harassment continued despite Allan no longer being employed. After Allan left the company, Gotthelf said he called and told her that he loved her, according to the lawsuit. Gotthelf said she told the Post about this incident, but according to the lawsuit, the company shrugged it off as "just Col being Col. He hasn't changed."

Allan returned to the Post in 2019, NBC News reported at the time. Gotthelf said in her lawsuit that they ended up working closely together despite management promising that they wouldn't.

In her lawsuit, Gotthelf said Allan had the power to make decisions on stories she published, including one instance in 2019 when she said he told her to "get rid of" a story detailing E. Jean Carroll accusing then-President Donald Trump of sexual assault in the 1990s.

Poole joined the Post in 2021 as the editor-in-chief for the New York Post Group. Gotthelf said in the lawsuit that she was demoted at this time and started reporting to Poole.

According to the lawsuit, Gotthelf told Poole about the sexual harassment accusations in November 2021 after he asked what happened between her and Allan.

The Post announced Gotthelf "departed" the paper on January 12, and officially announced her exit to employees via email on Tuesday morning, according to the staff email seen by Insider.

Sources told Insider that Post staffers got wind of Gotthelf's exit last week, though no official announcement had been made at the time.

"Any suggestion of wrongdoing related to the management changes announced today is meritless," a New York Post and News Corp spokesperson said in a statement to Insider. The company didn't comment on Gotthelf's lawsuit.

Gotthelf said in a statement about her lawsuit: "For more than two decades, I took great pride in my work shaping coverage at one of the most widely read news organizations in the country. While I never intended to become the news, the truth of what happened to me deserves to be heard. I will miss my colleagues dearly and hope that by speaking out there can be positive change for other women at the Post."

Gotthelf's lawyer, Douglas H. Wigdor, said in a statement: "The New York Post's unlawful treatment of its top female editor after twenty-plus years of service is nothing short of appalling. 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. We intend to aggressively move forward with holding the Post accountable and protecting Ms. Gotthelf's rights."