

# Former New York Post editor claims harassment in News Corp lawsuit

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A former New York Post editor has sued its owner News Corp, alleging that Col Allan, a close lieutenant of Rupert Murdoch, harassed her for years and that Murdoch protected Allan's reputation even as he was forced to resign.

Michelle Gotthelf, the former digital editor-in-chief of the Post, alleges that in 2015 Allan, at the time her boss, propositioned her for sex, according to a lawsuit filed in the Southern District of New York.

Gotthelf alleges Allan told her at a dinner "we should sleep together", degraded women in the newsroom, called a female editor a "sneaky lesbian", and said Murdoch "doesn't like many women".

Allan, an Australian tabloid editor and longtime Murdoch confidante, was forced to resign as NY Post's editor-in-chief in 2016 but was given a "rousing send off" by Murdoch, who described him as "one of the most outstanding editors of his generation", the lawsuit alleges.

The NY Post then rehired Allan as a consultant in 2019, ahead of the presidential election in which Donald Trump ran against Joe Biden. As a consultant, Allan told Gotthelf to "get rid of" a story reporting rape allegations against Trump, according to the lawsuit.

The allegations stem from around the same time that Roger Ailes, the former chief executive and founder of Fox News, was forced out due to sexual harassment claims.

Ailes left in July of 2016, as several women came forward with allegations against him, the lawsuit alleges. But Murdoch gave a similarly effusive send-off, praising Ailes for his "remarkable contribution to our company and our country".

Gotthelf says that after raising her complaints about Allan's harassment, the NY Post diminished her role at the company, and she was told to "stop complaining".

In 2021 the Post hired Keith Poole as the new editor-in-chief. Gotthelf was fired last week after more than two decades at the company.

Poole announced Gotthelf's departure in an email to staff on Tuesday, thanking her for her work. "Any suggestion of wrongdoing related to the management changes announced today is meritless", said a spokesperson for News Corp and the New York Post.

Allan could not be reached for comment.

Gotthelf has sued News Corp, Allan and Poole, alleging that she was discriminated against based on her sex and suffered monetary harm and “mental anguish”.

“The New York Post’s unlawful treatment of its top female editor after twenty-plus years of service is nothing short of appalling”, said Douglas Wigdor, a lawyer representing Gotthelf.

“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.”

Before his four decades running the NY Post, Allan was editor of the Australian Daily Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph.