


Fired NY Post Editor Says Boss Sexually Harassed Her, Was Verbally Abusive, and Demanded She Delete a Negative Story About Trump

 mediaite.com/print/fired-ny-post-editor-says-boss-sexually-harassed-her-was-verbally-abusive-and-demanded-she-delete-a-negative-story-about-trump

January 18, 2022

By [Aidan McLaughlin](#)

The former top editor of the *New York Post's* website, who was fired last week, in a new lawsuit accuses the paper's longtime editor in chief **Col Allan** of "years of sex-based harassment" — including propositions for sex, extensive verbal abuse, and a demand she delete a story on a rape allegation against **Donald Trump**.

Michelle Gottself worked at the *Post* for more than two decades, and rose the ranks to editor in chief of the tabloid's website. Her lawsuit, which was first reported by the *New York Times*, was filed the week after she was fired from the *Post*.

According to the lawsuit, Allan propositioned Gottself for sex in 2015 when he was top editor of the *Post*, telling her "We should sleep together."

The alleged request for sex "was the culmination of several years of sex-based harassment that Ms. Gottself had to endure because, according to Mr. Allan, Ms. Gottself reminded him of his wife," the suit states.

The complaint alleges that Allan was verbally abusive, once telling Gottself to "get the fuck out," and that he degraded women generally as "skanks," "stupid women," and even called one as a "sneaky lesbian."

The suit says the harassment began in 2013. Gottself says she lodged complaints with *Post* leadership repeatedly, and was told each time that nothing could be done, and that alerting management "only made things worse."

Allan, one of **Rupert Murdoch's** top deputies, retired from the *Post* in 2016 and returned to Australia. The suit claims he was forced into retirement by Gottself's allegations.

But Col would return to the *Post* in 2019, this time as an "adviser." As the *New York Times* notes, he was more than that — he effectively ran the newsroom.

Gottself was told that Allan was only returning as a "consultant" and that she would not report to him. Allan, however, became a "de facto supervisor," the suit states — and a "threatening" and "abusive" one at that.

In 2019, when the *Post* covered **E. Jean Carroll's** allegation of rape against then-President Trump, Allan allegedly demanded that Gotthelf delete the story. She refused, and complained to HR as well as News Corp. CEO **Robert Thompson**.

When she said she was not supposed to be reporting to Allan, she was allegedly told that if Allan “tells you to do something, you do it.”

In 2021, the *Post* hired a new editor in chief, British tabloid veteran **Keith Poole**. In November, according to the complaint, Gotthelf told Poole about the alleged harassment.

Two months later, Gotthelf was fired.

Douglas Wigdor, the high-profile attorney representing Gotthelf in the suit — which names both Allan and Poole as defendants — said in a statement to Mediaite that the paper's treatment of his client is “appalling.”

“The New York Post's unlawful treatment of its top female editor after twenty-plus years of service is nothing short of appalling,” he 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. We intend to aggressively move forward with holding the Post accountable and protecting Ms. Gotthelf's rights.”

Wigdor has represented a series of clients that sued Fox News for harassment, including accusers of **Bill O'Reilly** and **Ed Henry**.

In a statement to the *Times*, a *Post* spokesperson said, “Any suggestion of wrongdoing related to the management changes announced today is meritless.”

This isn't the first time Allan's name has graced a harassment lawsuit. In 2009, a former editor fired by the paper accused the *Post* of sexual harassment and racism.

Mediaite reported at the time that Allan is described in that complaint as a “sexually aggressive and crude alpha-male, known for propositioning employees and even allegedly showing women pictures of a naked man on his cellphone.”