


Former New York Post editor-in-chief Col Allan sexually harassed and propositioned employee: suit

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Noah Goldberg

The MAGA hat-wearing former editor-in-chief of the New York Post is a bully who sexually harassed a high-ranking editor who spurned his advances and then made her kill a story about rape allegations against then-President Donald Trump, according to a new lawsuit.

Michelle Gottself, the top woman editor at the Post until last Wednesday, said in her suit filed Tuesday in Manhattan Federal Court that Col Allan, 68, resigned as editor-in-chief in 2016 after she alerted higher-ups that he'd propositioned her for sex.

But Allan was not gone for long. He was re-hired as a consultant for the tabloid in 2019 and quickly began issuing orders to Gottself, despite an agreement he would never supervise her again, she claims.

"Mr. Allan's request that Ms. Gottself sleep with him 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 reads.

Gottself accuses Allan of homophobia, bullying, sexism and biased coverage of Donald Trump in the lawsuit that gives a rare behind the scenes look at the right-wing paper that plays an important role in Rupert Murdoch's media empire.

In 2011, Allan refused to put New York's legalization of gay marriage on the front page, according to the suit.

"What will these people be marrying next, animals?" he allegedly asked Gottself.

The Australian Allan, who was known to impose Murdoch's right-wing politics on coverage, also referred to women in the newsroom as "skanks," "stupid women," and "sneaky lesbians," according to the suit. He allegedly ordered a story on gossip columnist E. Jean Carroll's lawsuit alleging she was raped by Trump in a Bergdorf Goodman dressing room in the mid-1990s be removed from the Post's website.

An angry Allan said that Carroll was either "the world's unluckiest woman or a liar" and that her rape claims were "baseless s--t," the suit states.

"I took great pride in my work shaping coverage at one of the most widely read news organizations in the country," Gottself said in a statement provided by her attorneys. "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.”

Allan made a gross proposition to Gotthelf over drinks following an offsite editors’ meeting in 2016 — after admitting he was a cuckold and peppering her with questions about her sex life, the suit states.

Allan confessed his wife had not slept with him in years and was with another lover, the suit says.

“You should get yourself a lover. That’ll fix her,” Gotthelf responded jokingly, according to the lawsuit.

“What about you?” Allan responded, the suit says. “We should sleep together.”

Gotthelf refused, and Allan responded that he had slept with another female employee at the Post before, the suit says.

After she rejected the proposal, Allan — already known as a belligerent boss prone to profanity-laden outbursts — began treating Gotthelf even worse, the suit says.

In one embarrassing episode, he ripped up a list of stories that she had prepared for a meeting shortly after the rejection and yelled at her to “get the f--k out” in front of other editors, according to the complaint.

That’s when Gotthelf made a report to HR about the bullying and sexual harassment, the suit alleges.

Allan was forced to resign in April 2016, though not quite in disgrace, with Murdoch coming to The Post’s office to bid him farewell, the suit says.

“Mr. Murdoch publicly lauded Mr. Allan, calling him ‘one of the most outstanding editors of his generation’ and a ‘great friend and colleague,’” the complaint claims.

The News reported at the time that Allan was known to walk around the newsroom in a red “Make America Great Again” cap.

Despite Gotthelf’s complaint to HR, Allan returned to The Post in 2019, much to her dismay, she says. He used the new perch to flaunt his power over her, she claims.

During a boozy late night prank call just days after Gotthelf’s father died, Allan called her ranting and raving about a story in the Daily News that The Post had missed, only to change tacks and tell Gotthelf, “I love you,” according to the suit.

In late 2021, the Post's new editor-in-chief, Keith Poole, asked Gotthelf during a meeting what happened between her and Allan, the suit says. She told Poole about the proposition.

Two months later, Poole fired Gotthelf, the suit says.

“Any suggestion of wrongdoing related to the management changes announced today is meritless,” said a spokeswoman for The Post.