

Former NY Post Digital Boss Sues for Sexual Harassment, Retaliation for Complaint About Ex-Top Editor Col Allan

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January 18, 2022

The former digital editor-in-chief of the New York Post is suing the media outlet, its former top editor Col Allan and New York Post Group editor Keith Poole for sexual harassment and retaliation for reporting her accusation.

Gotthelf, who worked with the NY Post for 20 years before being terminated last Wednesday, filed suit Tuesday saying that in 2015 Allan sexually propositioned her by saying “we should sleep together.” She said that the proposition was after years of other sex-based harassment and abuse, including Gotthelf witnessing Allan harass and degrade women by referring to them as “skanks,” “stupid women” or “sneaky lesbian” and further humiliating Gotthelf in front of her male peers.

Allan retired in 2016, but Gotthelf’s attorneys claim that the New York Post protected Allan and his reputation, saying that he chose to retire rather than being forced to resign due to the accusations. It also says that Allan was rehired in 2019 and became a supervisor after she says she was told that he would just be a consultant and that she would not report to him. The suit also accuses Allan of telling Gotthelf to “get rid of” a story reporting rape allegations against then President Donald Trump made by former Elle columnist E. Jean Carroll.

Gotthelf says that in retaliation her responsibilities and authority were steadily eroded with work given to less qualified men, and that she was effectively demoted in early 2021 when the company hired Poole. After she disclosed to Poole that Allan had sexually harassed her in November 2021, the suit then says that she was terminated two months later, ending her 20-year career with the company.

“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,” Gotthelf said in a statement. “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.”

“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,” said Gotthelf’s attorney Douglas H. Wigdor, founding partner at Wigdor LLP. “We intend to aggressively move forward with holding the Post accountable and protecting Ms. Gotthelf’s rights.”

“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.

Poole on Tuesday additionally sent an internal memo to staff saying that Gotthelf departed the Post effective on January 15 and thanked her for her 20 years with the Post.

“I want to take this opportunity to thank her for all she has done during her 20-plus-year tenure here, and I hope you will join me in wishing her the best for the future,” Poole wrote in the memo obtained by TheWrap. “I’m also delighted to announce that Nicole Millsfield has been promoted to SVP, Audience Development, New York Post Group, reporting to me. Further, following some remarkable audience growth, Mark Graham, Editor-in-Chief, Decider, will also now report to me. We anticipate additional appointments in the coming days, as we continue our efforts to build on The Post’s success throughout 2022 and beyond, and I look forward to updating you on these plans very soon.”