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BREAKING

# Ex-NFL Network Reporter Sues League For Racial Discrimination—Accusing Bills And Cowboys Owners Of Offensive Comments

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**TOPLINE** Former NFL Network reporter Jim Trotter sued the NFL on Tuesday, alleging his employment contract was not renewed this year because he repeatedly pressed NFL commissioner Roger Goodell about hiring practices and diversity measures, according to [a filing](#) that claims Bills owner Terry Pegula and Cowboys owner Jerry Jones made disparaging comments about Black players and shrugged off diversity concerns.



Trotter departed NFL Network early this year and later joined sports journalism outlet The Athletic. ... [+] COOPER NEILL/GETTY IMAGES

#### KEY FACTS

- Trotter, whose NFL Network contract was **not renewed** earlier this year, says he called out the NFL on institutional discrimination throughout multiple levels of the league—a stance he claims resulted in him losing his job.
- The lawsuit claims Trotter was not being given work assignments and that his inquiries directed toward the NFL’s diversity measures were questioned by a supervisor.
- Trotter said he witnessed “unchecked” discriminatory conduct throughout his time at the NFL’s in-house cable network, alleging Pegula—the **billionaire owner** of the Bills—said, in response to player protests, “If the Black players don’t like it here, they should go back to Africa and see how bad it is.”

- The lawsuit also alleges Jones, the Cowboys' billionaire owner, said Black people should buy their own team and make their own hires if they “feel some kind of way”—Trotter said he complained about Pegula and Jones' comments but the NFL did not take action (both owners denied Trotter's allegations).
- The reporter accused the league and NFL Network of discrimination and retaliation under federal and state law, and asked for unspecified damages.
- The NFL told *Forbes* on Tuesday it takes Trotter's concerns seriously but strongly disputes “his specific allegations, particularly those made against his dedicated colleagues at NFL Media,” adding Trotter's departure was part of business decisions made to “address a challenging economy and a changing media environment.”

### CRUCIAL QUOTE

Trotter said in a [statement](#) posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, he was filing the suit “because I can't complain about things that are wrong if I'm unwilling to fight for what's right.”

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### CHIEF CRITICS

“The statement attributed to me in Mr. Trotter's complaint is absolutely false,” Pegula said in a [statement](#) Tuesday. “I am horrified that anyone would connect me to an allegation of this

kind. Racism has no place in our society and I am personally disgusted that my name is associated with this complaint.” Jones also pushed back against Trotter, telling *Forbes* Tuesday, “The representation made by Jim Trotter of a conversation that occurred over three years ago with myself and our VP of Player Personnel Will McClay is simply not accurate.”

#### TANGENT

Trotter is represented by the same law firm as Brian Flores, the defensive coordinator for the Minnesota Vikings who sued the NFL for [racial discrimination](#) this year.

#### KEY BACKGROUND

Trotter’s tenure with NFL Network came to an end in March, when the reporter thanked the media company for the “lessons learned and affirmed over the last five years.” His departure materialized about two months after he [challenged Goodell](#) at a “State of the League” press conference on the NFL’s diversity and inclusion system. Trotter said during his five years working for NFL media, “we’ve never had a Black person in senior management in our newsroom,” adding “there is no one who looks like [NFL] players at the table when decisions are being made about how they are covered.” The pushback against Goodell, who said diversity progress had been made [across the league](#), was a follow-up on similar comments Trotter made the year before. Trotter now works as a national columnist with The Athletic, where the reporter said he [didn’t have to worry](#) about his “words being watered down or silenced altogether.”

#### FURTHER READING

[Ex-Dolphins Coach Brian Flores Sues NFL For Racial Discrimination](#) (*Forbes*)

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