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Jerry Jones, Terry Pegula Accused of Making Racist Comments in Jim Trotter Lawsuit

JOSEPH SALVADOR • 1 HOUR AGO



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Jim Trotter, a former reporter at NFL Network, filed a discrimination and retaliation lawsuit last week against the NFL and NFL Media, saying that his contract was not renewed because he repeatedly spoke out about pro football's lack of diversity at the league level and among its coaches and within its media coverage. The lawsuit, obtained by both ESPN and NFL Network, includes several moments of racist comments that Trotter said he heard from those with whom he worked, including Bills owner Terry Pegula and Cowboys owner Jerry Jones.

On Sept. 30, 2020, a Zoom call took place with several NFL media members to connect with owners who were unable to meet in person. An unnamed NFL Media reporter recalled a conversation with Pegula during which the Bills owner said, "If the Black players don't like it here, they should go

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back to Africa and see how bad it is,” when discussing player support for social activism and the Black Lives Matter movement, according to the lawsuit.

Pegula released a statement Tuesday denying allegations that he made the racist comment.

“The statement attributed to me in Mr. Trotter’s complaint is absolutely false,” Pegula said in the release. “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.”

The comment left reporters and those in attendance stunned, according to the lawsuit. Trotter spoke up and asked what was going to be done about the racist comment, but was repeatedly told “the league office is investigating it” in the following weeks. Finally, a year later, Trotter was told that “New York [the NFL league office] says it’s an HR matter and that’s the end of it.”

In the same section of the lawsuit, titled “Swept Under the Rug,” there’s also a mention of Jones telling Trotter, “If Blacks feel some kind of way, they should buy their own team and hire who they want to hire.” The statement came after Trotter asked the Cowboys owner about the lack of Black professionals in decision-making positions in the NFL during a conversation at the 2020 Hall of Fame Game in Canton, Ohio. Jones has not commented on the allegation. Trotter was later told not to mention the conversation on the air at NFL Network, according to the filing.



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