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## *Fox News Is Accused In Bias Suit*

By JULIA PRESTON

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a federal lawsuit yesterday against the Fox News network, claiming it harassed and discriminated against its female employees, creating a "hostile work environment because of their sex."

The suit, filed in Federal District Court in Manhattan, is based on an investigation by the commission, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., of a claim brought by a former Fox employee, Kim Weiler.

"We investigated the allegations and charges that were made and found them to be baseless," said Steven Mintz of the New York law firm Mintz & Gold, which represented Fox News in the commission's investigation. "Fox News questions the motivations behind the charges." He declined to elaborate further yesterday evening.

The commission claims that a Fox vice president, Joe Chillemi, "routinely used gross obscenities and vulgarities when describing women or their body parts," language that it says Mr. Chillemi "did not use with male employees." The suit contends that Mr. Chillemi "routinely cursed at and otherwise denigrated women employees," telling them to "be a man."

The suit charges that Mr. Chillemi, in a discussion about a television segment focusing on sexism in the workplace, said, "Of course I'd pick the man" if he had to choose between a woman and a man for the same position, because he was concerned that a woman could become pregnant and leave her job. Mr. Chillemi is described in the suit as the supervisor of the Fox Advertising and Promotions Department.

The suit became public on the courthouse docket in the late afternoon.

The suit charges that Fox routinely relegated female employees to freelance work and less secure jobs. It says that Ms. Weiler was "constructively discharged" as a result of the network's practices. It was not clear whether Ms. Weiler was fired.

The lawsuit seeks to force Fox to institute policies to correct what it calls the discrimination against women at the news network, and demands punitive damages.