

# NBC Fires 'Today' Host Matt Lauer Over Sexual Misconduct Allegations

NBC News fired popular *Today* show host Matt Lauer after receiving what it called a detailed complaint from a colleague about inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace, the network said on Wednesday.

"On Monday night, we received a detailed complaint from a colleague about inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace by Matt Lauer," NBC News chairman Andrew Lack said in a statement.

"It represented, after serious review, a clear violation of our company's standards. As a result, we've decided to terminate his employment.

"While it is the first complaint about his behavior in the over 20 years he's been at NBC News, we were also presented with reason to believe this may not have been an isolated incident," the statement said.

Lauer's agent, Ken Lindner, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Reuters was unable to independently confirm the accusation against Lauer.

The news was announced on television by fellow *Today* co-hosts Savannah Guthrie and Hoda Kotb at the start of the talk show, a staple of U.S. morning television for more than six decades.

"This is a sad morning at *Today* and at NBC News," Guthrie said, visibly shaken. "We just learned this moments ago just this morning. As I'm sure you can imagine we are devastated."

Lack's statement did not identify the colleague who made the accusation.

"We are deeply saddened by this turn of events," Lack said in the statement. "But we will face it together as a news organization—and do it in as transparent a manner as we can."

## **Trump Tweets**

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Twitter shortly after the news was announced, "Wow, Matt Lauer was just fired from NBC for 'inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace.'"

"But when will the top executives at NBC & Comcast be fired for putting out so much Fake News. Check out Andy Lack's past!" he added, without further explanation.

A representative for NBC News did not immediately respond to questions about Trump's tweet.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, then-Republican candidate Trump was accused by 13 women who publicly said that in the past he had physically touched them inappropriately in some way, the Washington Post reported.

Trump denied the accusations, accused rival Democrats and the media of a smear campaign, and went on to be elected president. Reuters did not independently confirm the accusations against Trump.

*Today* co-host Al Roker briefly acknowledged the termination on air, stating, "We're dealing with the news about a friend of 30 years and we're all trying to process it."

Since Lauer took over the anchor chair in 1997, *Today* has dominated morning show ratings.

According to *Fortune* magazine, Lauer signed a two-year deal in 2016 that would pay him \$20 million per year. He joined *Today* in January 1994. The anchor has interviewed presidents George Bush and Barack Obama and broadcast from seven Olympic games.

Comcast Corp, the largest U.S. cable television company, owns

NBCUniversal. {eoa}

© 2017 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.