

Sean Hannity Defends Boss, Says Ouster Would Be End of Fox News

by **Anousha Sakoui**

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- Network co-president Shine said worried about job: NY Magazine
 - Someone 'high up and inside' seeks Shine's departure: Hannity
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Sean Hannity. Photographer: Paul Zimmerman/Getty Images

Sean Hannity, one of Fox News's most popular anchors, threw his support behind network co-president Bill Shine after a report the executive could be the next head to roll in a sexual-harassment scandal.

Hannity took to his Twitter account to tell his 2.33 million followers that someone "high up and inside" Fox News was pushing for the ouster of Shine, who he described as innocent. He created the hashtag #IStandWithBill, which he changed to #IStandWithShine to avoid any confusion with Bill O'Reilly, his former on-air colleague, who was forced out of the company last week amid sexual-harassment allegations he denied.

Shine isn't the subject of any investigation at Fox and hasn't been accused of sexual harassment, a person familiar with the matter said. Fox News declined to comment.

The online outburst by Hannity, who has emerged as one the most prominent public faces of Fox News with the departures of O'Reilly and Megyn Kelly over the past year, shows the backstage drama at the country's most-watched cable channel is far from over. Fox and some of its employees continue to face allegations of sexual and racial discrimination despite a commitment by the company's leaders to improve conditions in the workplace after the ouster of Fox News co-founder Roger Ailes last year.

Andrea Tantaros, a former Fox host, has claimed in a lawsuit that Shine [knew](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-23/ex-fox-news-host-sues-alleging-sex-fueled-cult-at-network) [of Ailes's alleged misconduct and ignored it](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-23/ex-fox-news-host-sues-alleging-sex-fueled-cult-at-network). Shine has denied the claim.

Ailes was replaced in August as chairman of Fox News by Rupert Murdoch, who's also the chairman and controlling shareholder of parent company 21st Century Fox Inc. Shine and Jack Abernethy were named co-presidents of the network. New York magazine, citing unnamed sources, reported Thursday that Shine was concerned about his future at the network and had unsuccessfully sought a statement of support from Murdoch and his sons, Lachlan and James.

"I pray this is NOT true because if it is, that's the total end of the FNC as we know it," Hannity tweeted, linking to the article. Shine denied having made the request, according to the magazine.

Shine joined Fox News in 1996 as the producer of "Hannity & Colmes" and rose through the ranks to oversee the network's entire programming slate, including Hannity's eventual transition to become a solo host. Hannity now regularly wins the ratings for his slot at 10 p.m. New York time.

Eleven current and former Fox News employees [filed](#) a class-action race-bias lawsuit against Fox Wednesday. And CNN reported Thursday that a federal investigation into financial settlements with accusers has been widened to include the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which has jurisdiction over mail-fraud cases. Fox declined to comment.

Another Fox News host, Jesse Watters, has been defending himself this week from critics who say a comment he made on air about Ivanka Trump was inappropriate. Watters said he was misinterpreted. The host, whose show "The Five" just moved to prime time this week after O'Reilly's departure, said Wednesday he's on vacation for the rest of the week.