



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 10, 2018

Moonves Out at CBS

Ronan Farrow, who nearly single-handedly brought down movie tycoon Harvey Weinstein [with a shocking report alleging years of rape and sexual harassment](#), has another notch in his reportorial revolver: CBS chieftain Leslie Moonves.

[Moonves \(shown\) resigned](#) as chairman and chief executive on Sunday [after the second](#) of Farrow's [two bombshell reports](#) about the man who oversees the leftist network.



The stories Farrow's sources told about the 69-year-old TV mogul mirror those about Weinstein, including an outright assault in which Moonves forced a woman to perform oral sex.

Three Decades of Bad Behavior

The women with whom Farrow spoke for the stories in *The New Yorker* tell harrowing tales of Moonves' pinning them down and kissing them and putting his hand up skirts during business meetings.

[The first story appeared](#) in early August, but did not prompt CBS to fire Moonves immediately. The corporation only cashiered him after Sunday's story appeared with fresh revelations that depict yet another top media personality as a cad, masher, and well-dressed thug.

The stories describe Moonves not just as a sexual harasser who inappropriately touched women, but as a violent rapist who could, and did, harm their careers.

As the first story summarized Moonves, "Six women who had professional dealings with him told me that, between the nineteen-eighties and the late aughts, Moonves sexually harassed them."

"Four described forcible touching or kissing during business meetings, in what they said appeared to be a practiced routine," Farrow reported, while two others said Moonves threatened to and actually did harm their careers. Said one, "what happened to me was a sexual assault, and then I was fired."

Moonves even went after massage therapists and a make-up artist, Farrow reported.

Moonves denied the charges. "Throughout my time at CBS," he said after the first piece, "we have promoted a culture of respect and opportunity for all employees, and have consistently found success elevating women to top executive positions across our company." He continued,

I recognize that there were times decades ago when I may have made some women uncomfortable by making advances. Those were mistakes, and I regret them immensely. But I always understood and respected — and abided by the principle — that 'no' means 'no,' and I have never misused my position to harm or hinder anyone's career. This is a time when we all are appropriately focused on how we help improve our society, and we at CBS are committed to being part of the solution."

[After Farrow's second story](#), Moonves admitted what he called "consensual relations" but denied forcing women to do anything. "The appalling accusations in this article are untrue," he said. "What is true is that I had consensual relations with three of the women some 25 years ago before I came to CBS." He continued,



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And I have never used my position to hinder the advancement or careers of women. In my 40 years of work, I have never before heard of such disturbing accusations. I can only surmise they are surfacing now for the first time, decades later, as part of a concerted effort by others to destroy my name, my reputation, and my career. Anyone who knows me knows that the person described in this article is not me.

\$120 Million Severance?

Actually, more than few people who know Moonves, Farrow reported, say the person described in the articles is Moonves.

But that aside, even more shocking than the network's delay in cashiering Moonves is what it might pay him if an internal investigation doesn't find enough evidence — which seems doubtful — to have fired him for cause. Moonves stands to collect \$120 million, [a filing with the Securities and Exchange says](#), if the probe goes his way.

The SEC filing also says CBS will donate \$20 million to the #MeToo movement to help women's equality in the workplace.

Moonves, who earned \$69 million annually, is the just latest powerhouse in the media and entertainment to be exposed. [Among the others were](#) the late Roger Ailes of Fox News, Bill O'Reilly, the once-popular Fox News talk-show host, former NBC analyst Mark Halperin, NBC's former faceman Matt Lauer, and the *New York Times's* former White House reporter Glenn Thrush.

Moonves isn't the only top man at CBS so accused. Charlie Rose, the host of the network's morning program, was sent packing in November after eight women disclosed his unwanted groping and phone calls.

Photo of Leslie Moonves: AP Images

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