Matt Lauer is fired at NBC, accused of crude misconduct

By DAVID BAUDER
AP Media Writer

NEW YORK —
"Today" show host Matt
Lauer was fired for what
NBC on Wednesday
called "inappropriate
sexual behavior" with
a colleague and was
promptly confronted with
a published report accusing
him of crude and habitual
misconduct with other
women around the office.

With his easygoing charm, Lauer has long been a lucrative and highly visible part of NBC News and one of the highest-paid figures in the industry, and his downfall shook the network and stunned many of the roughly 4 million viewers who start their day with him

He is easily one of the biggest names brought down in recent weeks by the wave of sexual misconduct allegations that have swept through Hollywood, the media and politics.

Network news chief Andrew Lack said in a memo to the staff that NBC received a complaint about Lauer's behavior on Monday and determined he violated company standards. NBC said the misconduct started when Lauer and a network employee were at the Sochi Olympics in 2014 and continued beyond that assignment.

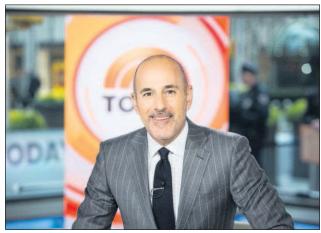
Lack said it was the first complaint lodged against Lauer in his 20 years at NBC, but "we were also presented with reason to believe this may not have been an isolated incident."

NBC News received two new complaints against Lauer on Wednesday, "NBC Nightly News" reported. The network didn't respond to a request

for comment.

Earlier Wednesday, it was left to Lauer's shaken "Today" colleagues, Savannah Guthrie and

THURSDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING



Nathan Congleton/NBC via AP
This Nov. 8 photo shows Matt Lauer on the set of the

"Today" show in New York.

Garrison Keillor fired after allegations

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Garrison Keillor, whose stories of small-town characters entertained legions of public radio listeners for 40 years on "A Prairie Home Companion," became another

Keillo

Companion," became another celebrity felled by allegations of workplace misconduct on Wednesday when Minnesota Public Radio terminated his contracts.

The homogrown humorist told

The homegrown humorist told The Associated Press he was fired over "a story that I think is more interesting and more complicated than the version MPR heard." Keillor didn't detail the allegation to AP, but he later told the

Minneapolis Star Tribune that he had put his hand on a woman's bare back when trying to console her.

"I meant to pat her back after she told me about her unhappiness, and her shirt was open and my hand went up it about six inches. She recoiled. I apologized," Keillor told the newspaper in an email. "I sent her an email of apology later, and she replied that she had forgiven me and not to think about it.

MPR said only that it received allegations of "inappropriate behavior" against Keillor last month involving one person who worked with him during his time hosting "A Prairie Home Companion." Keillor retired as host of the radio variety show last year, but continued to work for MPR on various projects.

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:25 ♥★★★ Patriot Games

:55 ♥★★ The 5th Wave

Hoda Kotb, to break the news to viewers at the top of the morning's show.

Among other things, Variety reported allegations that Lauer once gave a colleague a sex toy with an explicit note about how he wanted to use it on her; that he exposed himself to another female co-worker; that he would question female producers about their sex lives; and that he would talk about which co-hosts he would like to sleep with.

Lauer becomes the second morning host in a week to lose his job over sexual misconduct allegations. CBS fired Charlie Rose after several women who worked for him complained about his behavior.

U.S. adopts recovery plan for Mexican wolves, lawsuit planned

About 31 wolves in the wild in Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — After decades of legal challenges and political battles that have pitted states against the federal government, U.S. wildlife managers on Wednesday finally adopted a plan to guide the recovery of a wolf that once roamed parts of the American Southwest and northern Mexico.

The plan sets a goal of having an average of 320 Mexican gray wolves in the wild over an eight-year period before the predator can shed its status as an endangered species. In each of the last three years, the population would have to exceed the average to ensure the species doesn't backslide.

Officials estimate recovery could take another two decades and nearly \$180 million, a cost borne largely by breeding facilities that support threatened and endangered species work

endangered species work.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considered tens of thousands of public comments — from state lawmakers and business groups to independent scientists and environmentalists — as it worked to meet a court-ordered deadline to craft the recovery plan. It was a long time coming as the original guidance for restoring the wolf was adopted in 1982.

"This plan really provides us a roadmap for where we need to go to get this species recovered and delisted and get its management turned back over to the states and tribes," Sherry Barrett, the Mexican wolf recovery coordinator, told The Associated Press in an interview.

The release triggered immediate criticism from the environmental groups that initially sued to force the agency to craft a new plan. On Wednesday afternoon, they sent the agency a notice of their intent to sue, citing



Jim Clark/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via AP, Fi

In this undated photo provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a Mexican gray wolf leaves cover at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, Socorro County, N.M.

violations of the Endangered Species Act.

Barrett said state wildlife officials and other peers reviewed the scientific data and the models used to calculate the best way forward for the agency as it works to bolster genetic diversity and continue building the wild population.

There are now more of the wolves roaming the Southwest than at any time since the federal government began trying to reintroduce the animals in 1998. The most recent annual survey shows at least 113 wolves spread between southwestern New Mexico and southeast Arizona.

There are about 31 wolves in the wild in Mexico, officials said.

Under the recovery plan, those numbers would be expected to grow to 145 in the U.S. and 100 in Mexico over the next five years.

Barrett said targeted releases of captive-bred wolves and translocations are necessary to make the program work. Improvements in the survival rate — currently 28 percent — will be a factor that affects how many releases are needed, she said.

In an effort to avoid future skirmishes with states, the plan calls for cooperation with wildlife officials in New Mexico and Arizona when it

7 PM | 7:30 | 8 PM | 8:30 | 9 PM | 9:30 | 10 PM | 10:30 | 11 PM | 11:30

comes to the timing, location and circumstances of the releases. However, federal officials will make the final decisions.

Environmentalists have suggested there needs to be more than 700 wolves in the wild if the population is to withstand illegal shootings, genetic issues and other challenges.

"The final recovery plan fails to recover the Mexican gray wolf. It is political in nature, not science-based," said Bryan Bird with Defenders of Wildlife, arguing that suitable habitat in the Grand Canyon and Southern Rockies is being ignored.

Environmentalists have pressed for years for more captive wolves to be released, but ranchers and elected leaders in rural communities have pushed back because the predators sometimes attack domestic livestock and wild

Last year, the U.S. Interior Department's internal watchdog said the Fish and Wildlife Service had not fulfilled its obligation to remove Mexican gray wolves that preyed on pets and cattle.

Barrett said with the new plan and other rules that give the agency flexibility in managing problem wolves, there is optimism among officials that progress can be made.

NOVEMBER 30, 2017

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