



Cain Gives Inconsistent Answers to Sexual Harassment Claims

Cain is accused of having sexually harassed two different women during his 1996-99 tenure as president and CEO of the National Restaurant Association. Reports indicate that the women were asked to sign financial agreements with the group to leave the association, which barred the women from talking about their departures. Politico first learned of the allegations some time ago, but did not break the story until after several weeks of investigation and research.



When Cain was initially questioned on the sexual harassment charges this past weekend, his response was, "I had thousands of people working for me" at a variety of different businesses over the years, adding that he needs "some facts or some concrete evidence."

Later, however, Cain's spokesman J.D. Gordon indicated that Cain was "vaguely familiar" with the charges in question, but that the matter had already been resolved by Peter Kilgore, the general counsel for the restaurant association.

The Cain camp refused to address any of the specific details of the sexual harassment allegations, and Cain continued to affirm his innocence. "In all of my over 40 years of running businesses and corporations, I have never sexually harassed anyone," he declared at the National Press Club. "No. 2, while at the restaurant association, I was accused of sexual harassment. Falsely accused, I might add."

Cain also originally indicated that he was unaware of any financial settlements. "If the restaurant association did a settlement, I wasn't even aware of it and I hope it wasn't for much," Cain told Fox News. "If there was a settlement, it was handled by some of the other officers at the restaurant association." He made a similar statement at the Press Club, when he said he hoped if a settlement was in fact made, it was not for money.

Cain had hoped to end the discussion about the allegations at the Press Club by declaring, "As far as we're concerned, enough said about the issue."

By Monday evening, however, Cain finally admitted that he recalled details of a [financial settlement](#) with one of the female co-workers who accused him of sexual harassment: "My general counsel said this started out where she and her lawyer were demanding a huge financial settlement.... I don't remember a number.... But then he said because there was no basis for this, we ended up settling for what would have been a termination settlement."

He also stated that her supervisor believed her performance "was not up to par at the time she left the NRA [National Restaurant Association]."



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 1, 2011

When Cain was asked by Fox News host Greta van Susteren about the amount that was paid to the female co-worker, he responded, "Maybe three months' salary. I don't remember. It might have been two months. I do remember my general counsel saying we didn't pay all of the money they demanded."

Referring to the second woman in the Politico story, Cain also stated that he was unaware of any formal complaint, yet described the following detail: "She was in my office one day, and I made a gesture saying — and I was standing close to her — and I made a gesture saying, 'You are the same height as my wife.' And I brought my hand up to my chin saying, 'My wife comes up to my chin.'" At that point, Cain gestured with his flattened palm near his chin. "And that was put in there [the complaint] as something that made her uncomfortable."

Cain also revealed that the second woman worked at the NRA for a longer period than did the first woman. "[She] worked in our governmental affairs department and she worked in the function that managed our political action committee," he said.

The identities of both women have remained private, even as more media outlets are reporting on the allegations and have confirmed portions of Politico's report.

Cain asserts that he is the victim of a witch-hunt, but has not named any of his GOP rivals as being the source of the hunt. According to Cain's campaign website, it is the fault of the "inside-the-Beltway media" and the "political trade press," all of which are "casting aspersions on this character and spreading rumors that never stood up as facts."

Conservative pundit Ann Coulter agrees with the assertions that Cain has become a target, and compared his ordeal with that of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas during his confirmation hearings. Coulter referred to Cain's situation as "another high-tech lynching."

Cain asserts that it is the very reason he will not provide any further details on the circumstances, or refer anyone to the National Restaurant Association for any more details because "there's nothing to shoot down."

The National Restaurant Association released this statement:

The incidents in question relate to personnel matters that allegedly took place nearly fifteen years ago. Consistent with our longstanding policy, we don't comment on personnel issues relating to current or former employees.

Cain's varying assertions regarding the events have been inconsistent. He first indicated that he was unaware of the allegations, then reported that he was "vaguely familiar" with the claims, before ultimately answering specific details regarding the accusations and the financial settlements with certainty.

Also inconsistent are Cain's statements in light of a statement made by the National Restaurant Association. When Cain first acknowledged that he at least recalled the allegations, he indicated that the restaurant association and the human resources department had conducted an investigation into allegations about his conduct in the late 1990s.

"I recused myself and allowed my general counsel and my human resource officer to deal with the situation and it was concluded after a thorough investigation that it had no basis," claimed Cain. [In contrast](#), the head of the association's human resources department indicated last week during an interview with Politico that she was unfamiliar with any complaints from female employees about Cain.

Cain attempted to provide a reason for his inconsistencies during his interview with van Susteren,



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asserting that many of the facts had “come about during the day as I have tried to recall what happened back then.”

Meanwhile, some pundits are now indicating that the entire ordeal — not so much the accusations but the inconsistent way Cain and his campaign have addressed them — could mark the end of Cain’s presidential campaign. Appearing on Fox News on Monday night, Republican strategist Karl Rove stated that the best way for Cain to save his campaign was to ask the National Restaurant Association to provide any additional details about the allegations that would prove that the accusations were dismissed as false. “I suspect there’s gonna be a demand for the National Restaurant Association to release details of the investigation that was done,” said Rove.

However, so far the NRA has given no indication that it would be willing to do that, pointing to their policy of not divulging personal information.

For now, Cain’s supporters continue to defend their candidate. Steve Grubbs of Cain’s Iowa campaign declared, “I bet we’ll land more precinct captains than we did before the story. These sorts of distractions are not stopping our campaign from reaching our daily goals.”

Photo of Herman Cain: AP Images

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