

Report: Former employee is the source of Keillor allegations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS — The person who first accused the creator of "A Prairie Home Companion" of inappropriate conduct with a female employee was a disgruntled male staffer who spoke up after he was fired from the show last summer, according to a report published Friday.

The Star Tribune reported that the informant was Dan Rowles, who had been a close associate of Garrison Keillor and 16-year employee with the show. His disclosure triggered internal and external investigations by Minnesota Public Radio that concluded that Keillor had engaged in dozens of sexually inappropriate incidents over the years involving a longtime female writer for the show whose name has not been made public.

The woman did not give station officials her own account until two months after Rowles told them of Keillor's alleged misconduct.

Attorney Frances Baillon, who represents both Rowles and the woman, de-

clined to address why the writer chose to wait until last fall to lodge a complaint against Keillor. She told the newspaper her clients are still negotiating with MPR over the terms of a confidential settlement.

The attorney said Rowles was not acting from selfish motives. "Because our client believes people should feel safe at work, he raised his concerns about inappropriate workplace conduct," she said.

Baillon did not immediately reply to a message Friday from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Keillor, who has denied the allegations and described himself as a victim of "extortion," declined to comment to the Star Tribune, saying he is still "tied up" in his own talks with MPR to settle their legal separation.

Rowles, a longtime Twin Cities musician, joined the show in 1985 as a stagehand but soon earned a spot on the cast, performing in some of the show's most beloved recurring skits, including "Guy Noir" and "Buster the Show Dog." He also began contributing ideas as a



Garrison Keillor, the creator and former host of "A Prairie Home Companion," talks July 26 at his St. Paul office. According to a report published Friday, the person who first accused Keillor of inappropriate conduct with a female employee was a disgruntled staffer who spoke up after he was fired from the show last summer. AP FILE PHOTO

writer.

In 1992, a collection of monologues from the show received a Grammy nomination as best comedy album. Keillor took Rowles to the awards show, saying beforehand that if he won, "I'll give the trophy to Dan Rowles, who did most of the work. The album is a triumph of editing."

But Rowles was let go for the first time three years later. He returned in 2011 as a director, but also helped shape scripts and select music. Keillor retired from the show in 2016. MPR informed Rowles in mid-August that he would not be invited back for a second season with new host Chris Thile, the newspaper reported.