

## TV Host Leeann Tweeden Accuses Sen. Al Franken of Sexual Assault



**Summary:** *The former comedian and current Senator Al Franken has been accused of groping and forcefully kissing a woman while on a USO tour in 2006.*

Model and sport commentator Leeann Tweeden has stepped forward, accusing Democratic Senator Al Franken of Minnesota of “kissing and groping” her during a USO Tour in December 2006 with physical evidence to back up her claims.

In a post on the KABC website, Tweeden explains what happened during a USO Tour in 2006, which is supposed to be a fun time for the troops. She was on the tour with music artists Darryl Worley, Keni Thomas, and Mark Wills as well as a few Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders. Al Franken, a comedian at the time, was the headliner of the tour.

Franken wrote some skits for the show with props and costumes. Tweeden explained that she was just planning on being the emcee that introduces the acts. However, Franken informed her that he wrote a part for her that he thought would be funny. The part included a kiss from a Franken. She said, “I suspected what he was after, but I figured I could turn my head at the last minute, or put my hand over his mouth, to get more laughs from the crowd.”

Tweeden claims Franken pushed her backstage to “rehearse” so she finally gave in, still planning to turn her head when he went in for a kiss. She said, “We did the line leading up the kiss and then he came at me, put his hand on the back of my head, mashed his lips against mine and aggressively stuck his tongue in my mouth.”

She decided to keep the incidence quiet but made sure she was never alone with Franken again during the tour. He responded with “petty insults” such as devil horns drawn on the headshots she was autographing for the troops. When she arrived home and saw the CD of pictures from the tour she saw a photo of Franken groping her breasts while she was asleep on the flight home.

With the example of others stepping forward with their personal stories of assault, she says she is “no longer afraid.”

Franken has since issued a statement in response to her allegations. He said, “The first thing I want to do is apologize: to Leeann, to everyone else who was part of that tour, to everyone who has worked for me, to everyone I represent, and to everyone who counts on me to be an ally and supporter and champion of women. There’s more I want to say, but the first and most important thing – and if it’s the only thing you care to hear, that’s fine – is: I’m sorry. I respect women. I don’t respect men who don’t. And the fact that my own actions have given people a good reason to doubt that makes me feel ashamed.”

Franken continued, “But I want to say something else, too. Over the past few months, all of us – including and especially men who respect women – have been forced to take a good, hard look at our own actions and think (perhaps, shamefully, for the first time) about how those actions have affected women.”

Franken has asked for an ethics investigation be conducted into him, and he said he intends to cooperate fully. He has a history of making crude remarks, perhaps thinking it was “funny.” In 2000, a Playboy column discussed Franken’s fantasy of a machine performing oral sex on him. He also pointed fun at the rape of CBS reporter Lesley Stahl when he was a writer for “Saturday Night Live.”

He is also quoted in his book, “Al Franken: Giant of the Senate,” to faking the apologies for his remarks so that he could gain support for his campaign. He wrote, “To say I was sorry for writing a joke was to sell out my career, to sell out who I’d been my entire life and I wasn’t sorry that I had written Porn-o-Rama or pitched that stupid Lesley Stahl joke at 2 in the morning. I was just doing my job. I learned that campaigns have their own rules, their own laws of physics, and that if I wasn’t willing to accept that, I would never get to be a senator.”

Do you think Franken is actually sorry for what he did? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

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