

Fox News contributor says she was raped by host and then blacklisted by network

 [independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/fox-news-scottie-nell-hughes-rape-sexual-assault-network-host-charles-payne-a7954591.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/fox-news-scottie-nell-hughes-rape-sexual-assault-network-host-charles-payne-a7954591.html)

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Political contributor Scottie Nell Hughes has filed a lawsuit against Fox News accusing the network of punishing her after she claimed she was raped by anchor Charles Payne.

Ms Hughes alleged Mr Payne coerced her to have sex with him in 2013 “in exchange for career opportunities and benefits”.

She claims she was forced to remain in a sexual relationship with Mr Payne, during which she received more work at [Fox News](#), but was retaliated against by the network after ending the relationship.

The suit states Mr Payne had “used his position of power to pressure Ms Hughes into submission” and when Ms Hughes tried to put a stop to the relationship, he became “physically violent”.

When she eventually cut contact with him, the number of her appearances on Fox dropped from four to five times weekly, to five times over a period of 10 months.

Ms Hughes said in a statement: “What is most important to me is that justice will prevent other women from going through the nightmare I’m now living.”

Mr Payne, who hosts Fox’s Making Money, recently returned to the network after being suspended in July during an investigation into sexual harassment allegations.

He denies Ms Hughes’ allegations and “will defend himself vigorously against this baseless complaint”, his lawyer said in statement, according to the [New York Times](#).

Fox News has faced a flurry of allegations since former Fox News CEO Roger Ailes was ousted last year, after former host Gretchen Carlson accused him of harassment.

Earlier this month, the network announced the departure of host Eric Bolling over allegations he sent lewd text messages to female staff.

Ms Hughes’ lawyers Douglas H Wigdor and Jeanne M Christensen said the suit represents “an action against Fox to hold it accountable for yet another case involving sexual harassment and retaliation inflicted by Fox executives in order to protect male, on-air talent”.

“After Ms Hughes confidentially reached out to Fox to disclose that she was sexually assaulted and raped by Fox anchor Charles Payne, Fox ruthlessly leaked her name to a reporter at the National Enquirer, along with a self-serving ‘statement’ by Payne apologising for what he falsely described as an ‘affair,’” they said.

Fox News denied the allegations in a statement.

“The latest publicity stunt of a lawsuit filed by Doug Wigdor has absolutely no merit and is downright shameful,” a spokesperson for the network said.