

Fox Analyst Scottie Nell Hughes Alleges She Was Raped By Host, Sues Network: Report

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Fox News commentator and early Trump surrogate Scottie Nell Hughes filed a lawsuit against the network on Monday, alleging that she was raped by anchor Charles Payne and then punished by Fox for coming forward, the *New York Times* [reports](#).

In the lawsuit, Hughes accuses Payne of having “pressured” his way into her New York hotel room in 2013, coercing her into having sex with him despite Hughes explicitly saying “no” and “stop.” This was reportedly the first incident in a larger pattern that would persist over the next two years, ostensibly in exchange for Payne helping advance Hughes’ career, the lawsuit contends.

Payne’s lawyer, Jonathan Halpern, said in a statement that his client “vehemently denies any wrongdoing and will defend himself vigorously against this baseless complaint.”

“We are confident that when the evidence is presented in this case, Mr. Payne will be fully vindicated and these outrageous accusations against him will be confirmed as completely false,” Halpern said.

Hughes came forward with her allegations in June, and Payne was suspended for two months while Fox investigated her claims, the *Times* reports. He resumed his role on the air this month. Hughes, though, said she was promptly blacklisted after cutting ties with Payne, and did not mince words describing her ordeal.

“In July of 2013, I was raped by Charles Payne,” she told the paper. “In July of 2017, I was raped again by Fox News. Since then, I have been living an absolute hell.” Not only was she blocked from appearing on Fox, she said, but the company went on to leak a story about her and Payne to the *National Enquirer*, which painted the situation as a consensual romantic affair. From the *Los Angeles Times*:

“As alleged in the complaint, 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 apologizing for what he falsely described as an ‘affair,’” Hughes’ attorney, Douglas Wigdor, said in a statement. “We intend to aggressively litigate Ms. Hughes’ claims and hold Fox accountable to the fullest extent under the law.”

Fox has called the lawsuit “bogus” and “downright shameful.”

“We will vigorously defend this,” it said in a statement.