

Fox News and Former Anchor Ed Henry Sued for Sexual Misconduct

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Chris Dolmetsch

Two former female employees sued [Fox News](#), accusing former anchor Ed Henry of rape and claiming several of the network's biggest stars participated in a culture of sexual harassment and misconduct.

Jennifer Eckhart, a former associate producer, and Cathy Areu, a former on-air analyst, filed a 39-page complaint in federal court in Manhattan in Monday. The suit alleges that Henry sexually harassed Eckhart on several occasions and raped her in a midtown Manhattan hotel room in 2017.

Fox News fired Henry, the co-anchor of its "America's Newsroom" program, on July 1, saying it had received a complaint of sexual misconduct against him from a former employee's lawyer.

Areu, perhaps best-known for her appearances as a liberal foil to conservative host Tucker Carlson on his show, said she was eager to graduate from occasional appearances to a full-time position at Fox. She accuses Carlson, Sean Hannity, "Media Buzz" host Howard Kurtz and a Fox contributor, Gianni Caldwell, of all holding out the possibility of advancement in exchange for sex and then retaliating by reducing her appearances after she refused.

"Based on the findings of a comprehensive independent investigation conducted by an outside law firm, including interviews with numerous eyewitnesses, we have determined that all of Cathy Areu's claims against Fox News, including its management as well as its hosts Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity & Howard Kurtz and its contributor Gianni Caldwell, are false, patently frivolous and utterly devoid of any merit," the network said in a statement.

"We take all claims of harassment, misconduct and retaliation seriously, promptly investigating them and taking immediate action as needed -- in this case, the appropriate action based on our investigation is to defend vigorously against these baseless allegations. Ms. Areu and Jennifer Eckhart can pursue their claims against Ed Henry directly with him, as Fox News already took swift action as soon as it learned of Ms. Eckhart's claims on June 25 and Mr. Henry is no longer employed by the network."

Catherine Foti, a lawyer for Henry, didn't immediately respond to an e-mail seeking comment on the suit.

The lawsuit is the latest legal headache for Fox News following a bevy of sexual harassment allegations that led to the ouster of former chief Roger Ailes in 2016. Former host Bill O'Reilly was also forced out of the network in 2017 amid similar allegations. Eckhart and Areu made explicit reference in their lawsuit to the network's previous issues.

"Fox News would have the public believe that it is a different place from the Fox News that was run by former disgraced Chairman and CEO Roger Ailes," they said. "Unfortunately, it is actually worse."

Eckhart says the married Henry "preyed upon, manipulated and groomed" her from the age of 24 by imposing power over her career and forced her into having a sexual relationship with him before raping her. Areu says Henry also sexually harassed her by sending her "wildly inappropriate" sexual images and messages throughout the first half of 2020.

The women say Fox News received complaints about Henry during the 2016 internal investigation it began after the allegations against Ailes but continued to promote him anyway.