

# Former Fox News Anchor Ed Henry Has Been Accused Of Rape And Sexual Harassment In A New Lawsuit

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Ed Henry, a former top anchor at Fox News, has been accused of rape and sexual misconduct in a federal lawsuit filed Monday by a producer and a frequent guest of the conservative cable news network.

The allegations come just three weeks after the former coanchor of *America's Newsroom* was fired after the network said it had received a complaint against Henry over an incident that had occurred "years ago."

In the lawsuit filed Monday, an attorney representing Jennifer Eckhart, a former associate producer on Fox Business, and Cathy Areu, a frequent guest across a number of programs, alleged Henry "preyed upon, manipulated, and groomed Ms. Eckhart" to have a sexual relationship with him, asked her to be his "sex slave" and "little whore," and threatened "punishment and retaliation" if she did not comply with his sexual demands.

Eckhart also alleges that Henry sexually assaulted her in the office and raped her at a hotel frequently used by visiting employees.

The lawsuit also names popular Fox News personalities Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity, host Howard Kurtz, and political analyst Gianni Caldwell, claiming they sexually harassed Areu.

In a statement to BuzzFeed News, Fox News denied the allegations and said it took "swift action" after learning about the claims against Henry.

"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."

The statement did not address any of the additional claims that were detailed in the federal lawsuit Monday, including the rape allegation against Henry.

Henry was fired earlier this month after the network said it had received a complaint from a former employee's attorney regarding sexual misconduct.

The complaint, the network said at the time, had occurred "years ago," CNN reported.

An attorney representing Henry denied the allegations in a statement, and claimed Eckhart "initiated and completely encouraged a consensual relationship."

"The Me Too movement has helped bring to light a number of injustices in our society, and everyone that has suffered deserves to be heard. This is not one of those cases," Henry's attorney, Catherine Foti, said. "Ed Henry looks forward to presenting actual facts and evidence, which will contradict the fictional accounts contained in the complaint. That evidence includes graphic photos and other aggressively suggestive communications that Ms. Eckhart sent to Mr. Henry."

According to the lawsuit, Henry used photos he took of Eckhart on his iPhone "as an intimidation tactic to silence her, and to be filed away and retained for purposes of blackmail that could destroy her career."

Eckhart later told Henry she had sore wrists, a broken nail, and a bruise on her leg, her attorney added.

The lawsuit alleges Fox News was aware of the allegations against Henry since 2017, and according to their attorneys, the independent investigator hired by Fox News did not speak to Eckhart or Areu "under reasonable conditions."

"To be clear, Mr. Henry was not terminated because he engaged in sexual misconduct — Fox News was willing to support and promote him knowing he had engaged in sexual misconduct," the lawsuit states. "Rather, Mr. Henry's employment was terminated because Fox News realized that it was on the precipice of a public relations nightmare and wanted to get out ahead of this suit and be able to claim that it had done the right thing. It had not."

The lawsuit also claims that Areu received a series of sexually explicit images and messages from the news anchor this year, including a photograph of a vagina being "clamped" by clothespins, a photo of a rubber glove where each finger appears to be a dildo, an image of a vibrator smoking a cigarette, and a picture of a woman with her mouth open while a man pulls her toward his groin captioned, "in case you wondering ... the male g-spot is located at the back of a woman's throat."

In another incident, Henry allegedly sent Areu a video titled, "Fastest interview" in which a woman flashes her vagina to a man during a job interview and being offered the job immediately.

Henry allegedly followed up the video by texting Areu, "Are you avail for anchor interview."

In another incident on March 8, 2018, attorneys allege Hannity offered male staffers \$100 to take Areu on a date.

"To make matters worse, Ms. Areu was 'stuck' and could not even leave because Mr. Hannity engaged in this conduct while she was 'hooked into' studio equipment that could only have been removed by a stagehand," the lawsuit states.

In December 2018, attorneys allege that Carlson told Areu he was attending the company Christmas party for only 10 minutes and was in New York City alone, "without any wife or kids" in his hotel room.

"Mr. Carlson was probing to see whether Ms Areu was interested in sexual relationship," the lawsuit states. "Ms. Areu awkwardly sidestepped Mr. Carlson's advances and declined to spend the night at his hotel."

After that incident, the lawsuit adds, Areu appeared on Carlson's show only three more times in 2019, even though she had appeared 17 times in 2018.

It also alleged Kurtz retaliated against Areu after she refused to meet him at the lobby of a hotel he was staying in, and that Caldwell had leveraged a meeting with Fox News personality Ann Coulter in exchange for a date.

Fox News denied the Areu's allegations, calling them "baseless."

"Mrs. Areu and Jennifer Eckhart can pursue their claims against Ed Henry directly with him, as Fox News has 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," the company said.