

# Ed Henry Accused of Rape, Trying to Make Fox News Staffer His 'Sex Slave' in Lawsuit

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Two women have come forward with accusations of sexual misconduct against Fox News' Ed Henry, Sean Hannity and Tucker Carlson.

In a lawsuit filed on Monday, former Fox News staffer Jennifer Eckhart's attorney claims she was "violently raped" by Henry, who was fired by the network on July 1. Meanwhile, journalist Cathy Aere's lawyer alleges she was sexually harassed by the former Fox News chief national correspondent.

Aere's attorney also alleges in the court documents that his client was sexually harassed by Hannity, 58, and Carlson, 51, as well as Fox News correspondents Howard Kurtz and Gianni Caldwell.

The lawsuit names Fox News, Henry, Hannity, Carlson and Kurtz as defendants.

In response to the filing, Fox News issued a statement to PEOPLE, saying: "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 Aere'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."

"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. Aere 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."

Fox News added: "There were not sexual harassment claims against Ed Henry at Fox News prior to Jennifer Eckhart's claim on June 25, 2020."

Fox News noted that "Cathy Aere was never an employee or a contributor — she was a guest of the network. Ms. Eckhart was a former associate producer on Fox Business."

Eckhart's attorney states in the filing that Henry, 49, began "exerting his abuse and power over her and her career" when Eckhart was just 24, claiming that Fox News was aware of Henry's behavior prior to network's recent decision to cut ties with him.

Eckhart's attorney also states in the filing that on June 25, his client informed Fox News that she had retained legal counsel "in connection with legal claims against Mr. Henry and Fox News."

Eckhart's attorney alleges that Henry asked her to be his "sex slave" and "threatened punishment and retaliation if [Eckhart] didn't comply with his sexual demands."

"Ms. Eckhart was violently raped while helpless and restrained in metal handcuffs, as Mr. Henry performed sadistic acts on her without her consent that left her injured, bruised and battered with bloody wrists," Eckhart's legal counsel states in the filing.

Is it not immediately clear when the alleged rape occurred.

Eckhart's attorney also alleges that Henry "took photos of Ms. Eckhart" and retained them "for purposes of blackmail that could destroy her career."

Included in the filing are text messages that allegedly show Henry speaking graphically and vulgarly to Eckhart, calling her his "little whore."

Eckhart's attorney alleges that after the incidents were brought to Fox News' attention, Henry was "not terminated ... he was not even disciplined."

"Fox News knew that Mr. Henry had engaged in sexual misconduct as far back as early 2017. At that time, when Fox News was conducting a company-wide investigation into issues of sexual harassment, multiple women came forward to complain that Mr. Henry had engaged in sexually inappropriate conduct towards them. Upon information and belief, this was known to Fox News' Executive Vice President of Human Resources, Kevin Lord (Mr. Lord), as well as Fox News President and Executive Editor Jay Wallace (Mr. Wallace) and Fox Business Network President, Lauren Petterson (Ms. Petterson)," Eckhart's attorney alleges in the filing.

"Thus, to be clear, Mr. Henry was not terminated because he engaged in sexual misconduct — Fox News was willing to support and promote him knowing that he had engaged in sexual misconduct. Rather, Mr. Henry's employment was terminated because Fox News realized that it was on the precipice of a public relations nightmare," Eckhart's attorney states.

As for Areu, her attorney states in the filing that Henry sent "a slew of wildly inappropriate sexual images and messages — which are in her possession — throughout the first half of this year, including among others."

The images and messages allegedly included nude photographs and videos of other women performing sexual acts, according to the filing.

Aeru's attorney states that Henry "also sent many other inappropriate texts, including many other texts suggesting that Ms. Aeru have sex with him."

At one point, during Aeru's time as a regular on *The Hannity Show* – which she appeared on until March 2018 – Hannity "threw \$100 on the set desk," according to Aeru's attorney in the filing.

"He then began calling out to the men in the room and demanding that someone take Ms. Aeru out on a date for drinks at Del Friscos. He repeatedly yelled, 'Who wants to take her on a date?' Ms. Aeru was completely mortified and made clear that she was incredibly uncomfortable with Mr. Hannity's misogynistic behavior by quietly pleading with one of her friends in the room to accept the money so the humiliation would end," her attorney states in the suit.

While Aeru was working on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, a producer "whispered in Ms. Aeru's ear... and told her that Mr. Carlson wanted her to stay until the very end of the show to chat with him," her attorney claims in the filing.

Aeru's counsel claims in the suit that Carlson told Aeru he would be "alone in New York City that night, and specifically said that he would be staying alone in his hotel room without any wife or kids" and was probing to "see whether Ms. Aeru was interested in a sexual relationship."

Aeru's attorney claims in the filing that Kurtz of Fox News *Media Buzz* also "invited Ms. Aeru to come to his hotel" to which she declined prompting him to allegedly refuse to "meet with her at the studio" the following day.

"Ms. Aeru has only appeared approximately three times on *Media Buzz* following her rejection of Mr. Kurtz's advances," Aeru's attorney states in the filing.

Aeru's attorney claims Caldwell also tried to pressure her "into dating him."

Aeru and Eckhart's claims come after Fox News saw founder and CEO Roger Ailes resign in 2016 following multiple allegations of sexual harassment made against him. He died in 2017 at the age of 77.