

# A Federal Lawsuit Accuses Fox News Anchor Ed Henry of Rape and Other Hosts of Harassment

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By Ian Spiegelman

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In a federal lawsuit filed Monday, a former reporter and associate producer at Fox News claims that former *America's Newsroom* host Ed Henry—who was fired from the troubled network this month for what Fox reps called “willful sexual misconduct”—brutally raped her in a series of attacks. The former employee, Jennifer Eckhart, as well as frequent Fox guest journalist Cathy Areu, also say that hosts Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity, and Howard Kurtz subjected them to sexual harassment.

Eckhart claims that Henry raped and assaulted her and “performed sadistic acts on her without her consent that left her injured, bruised and battered with bloody wrists” after raping and taking photos of her while she was in handcuffs.

The filing includes texts from Henry to Eckhart that her lawyers say are evidence that the anchor, a married man 20 years older than Eckhart, abused her as a non-consensual “sex slave” afraid of losing her job.

One 10 a.m. series of texts from Henry to Eckhart allegedly reads, “Bite your tongue,” and “You know who your Daddy is. Good long session last time. Left you bruised, batter, dazed, sated begging for more. #Perfect.”

In another message, Henry is accused of writing, “Fuck you and your safe word. You will know when I’m done.” In yet another missive, Henry appears to tell Eckhart, “When u r owned, you don’t get a ‘choice.’”

“You don’t own me,” Eckhart replied.

Cathy Areu, meanwhile, accuses Henry of sending her several inappropriate videos, including one titled, “Fastest Interview... Candidate selected in 3 seconds,” featuring a woman who was supposedly up for a Fox News position, “running across the room and jumping towards a camera—her skirt lifts up and the video ends with a closeup of her vagina.”

Lawyers for Eckhart and Areu also point to a segment on Hannity’s show in which the talking head “threw \$100 on the set desk [and] then began calling out to the men in the room and demanding that someone take Ms. Areu out on a date for drinks at Del Friscos. He repeatedly yelled, ‘Who wants to take her on a date?’”

Tucker Carlson, meanwhile, allegedly insisted that Areu stay on after a 2018 segment finished shooting and “hardly making any effort to hide his intentions, began telling Ms. Areu that 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.”

Kurtz, who often had Areu as a guest on his *MediaBuzz* program, is accused of repeatedly inviting her in March and July of 2019 to dinner and drinks, and also to his New York hotel room, while she was trying to land a job at Fox News.

“Ms. Areu politely declined but invited Mr. Kurtz to dinner with her and a friend who was in town,” the suit alleges. “Mr. Kurtz, who plainly wanted to see Ms. Areu only if she were alone and at his hotel (i.e., for sexual reasons) declined.”

The complaint continues, “The morning after Ms. Areu rejected Mr. Kurtz’s advances, he refused to meet with her at the studio and curtly said to her, ‘I’m booked solid this morning which is why I hoped to connect last night.’”

The media gatekeepers at Fox—for whom such complaints may have grown routine since the days when deceased founder Roger Ailes and banished headliner Bill O’Reilly allegedly treated the network as their own personal hunting ground for abuse victims—issued the following statement:

“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. 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.”

Attorneys Douglas H. Wigdor and Michael J. Willemen, who are representing Eckhart and Areu, responded, “Fox News will have paid the investigator, who also happens to be a management-side employment lawyer. In other words, a significant part of this ‘investigator’s’ time is spent defending companies like Fox News against allegations such as the ones brought herein. Moreover, the investigator did not even speak with either of our clients, even though both Ms. Eckhart and Ms. Areu offered to meet with him under reasonable conditions.”

As for Henry, he tweeted his own lawyer's statement, which says, among other things, that #MeToo got it wrong this time.