


# Fox News and ex-anchor Ed Henry loses bid to toss rape lawsuit where he promised career advancement

 [dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9975609/Fox-News-former-anchor-Henry-face-ex-producers-sexual-misconduct-lawsuit.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9975609/Fox-News-former-anchor-Henry-face-ex-producers-sexual-misconduct-lawsuit.html)

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## Fox News and former anchor Ed Henry lose bid to toss his accuser's lawsuit after she claimed he 'handcuffed and raped her' in NYC hotel room

- **Fox News and former anchor Ed Henry will face a lawsuit from employee who claims she was coerced into a violent sexual relationship**
- **A Manhattan judge said former associate producer Jennifer Eckhart could try to show Henry engaged in sex trafficking**
- **The judge also stated that Henry 'victim shamed' her by posting what he claimed were nude photos of Eckhart in the court docket**
- **In the same ruling, the judge ruled that Eckhart could also try to prove Fox News knew or should have known about Henry's harassing behavior**
- **Fox News said it would defend against Eckhart's 'baseless' claims, saying it 'takes harassment allegations seriously and acted appropriately'**
- **Eckhart said Fox News fired her in June 2020 after she complained about the work environment**

By [Matt McNulty For Dailymail.Com](#) and [Reuters](#)

Fox News and former anchor Ed Henry must face a lawsuit accusing him of promising career advancement to coerce an employee who he allegedly 'handcuffed and raped' in a New York City hotel room amid a sometimes violent sexual relationship, a US judge ruled on Thursday.

US District Judge Ronnie Abrams in Manhattan said former associate producer Jennifer Eckhart could try to show Henry engaged in sex trafficking, and 'victim shamed' her by posting what he claimed were nude photos of Eckhart in the court docket.

Abrams said Eckhart could also try to prove Fox News knew or should have known about Henry's harassing behavior, but not conduct related to alleged sex trafficking or the photos, with the suit also accusing the network of allowing a hostile work environment.

Separately, Abrams dismissed former on-air guest Cathy Areu's lawsuit accusing Henry and anchors Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity and Howard Kurtz of subjecting her to sexual harassment and a hostile environment, including demands she engage with them romantically and accept their 'misogynistic behavior.'

Abrams said Areu could not pursue some claims because she was not an employee, and did not show anchors punished her for resisting their advances by reducing her airtime and hurting her career.

In a statement to DailyMail.com, Fox News' Senior Vice President of Media Relations said: 'While we are pleased Judge Abrams ruled in favor of our motion to dismiss the Cathy Areu case, we remain committed to defending against the baseless allegations against Fox outlined in Jennifer Eckhart's claims.

'As we have previously stated, upon first learning of Ms. Eckhart's allegations against Ed Henry, FOX News Media immediately commenced a thorough independent investigation and within six days dismissed Mr. Henry for cause. We look forward to proving through the discovery process that FOX News Media takes harassment allegations seriously and acted appropriately.'

Henry, who has been married since 2010, sought to dismiss parts of the suit that didn't apply to him, calling the two women's respective rape and sexual misconduct claims 'malicious and defamatory'.

Eckhart, a former associate producer, alleged in the suit that Henry raped her and 'left her injured, bruised and battered, with bloody wrists' in a New York hotel room 'sometime in 2017' and that Fox executives were informed 'in graphic and specific detail' about her claim.

She also claimed Henry, 49, handcuffed her and then took naked pictures of her own his cell phone, which she believed he planned to later use to blackmail her.

In his motions to dismiss the lawsuit, Henry argued that it was actually Eckhart who pursued sexual relations with him. He disclosed a number of apparent interactions he shared with Eckhart in which he claim she sent him 'come-hither' text messages.

'The erotic and encouraging text messages she sent Mr. Henry (including one instructing Mr. Henry to 'come and get it'), along with the salacious and explicit pictures of herself, clearly demonstrate that Mr. Henry never assaulted her and that Ms. Eckhart pursued a consensual relationship with him,' Henry's lawyer wrote in the filing.

Henry's lawyers did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Ed Henry, left, and his wife, Shirley Henry, right. In his motions, Henry argued that it was actually Eckhart who pursued sexual relations with him

Fox News said it would defend against Eckhart's 'baseless' claims, saying it 'takes harassment allegations seriously and acted appropriately.'

Eckhart's and Areu's lawsuits echoed earlier claims about sexual misconduct that led to the departures of Fox News founder Roger Ailes and anchor Bill O'Reilly.

Fox News fired Henry in July 2020 after learning about Eckhart's accusations, including an alleged February 2017 rape in a Manhattan hotel room.

While the date of the rape allegation has not been specifically disclosed by Eckhart, in her suit she says that 'sometime in 2017' Henry invited her out for drinks at a restaurant, where he told her Fox was awarding him with his own show.

Eckhart says he invited her to take a walk back to his hotel, to which she obliged. She said in her suit that she agreed to do so because she feared it could affect her job if she refused.

It was in the hotel room that Eckhart says Henry handcuffed, raped her and then photographed her while she was still restrained.

The legal document claims that Eckhart 'pleaded for him to stop' and delete the images but he 'proceeded to forcefully rape Ms. Eckhart while she was still restrained and helpless in handcuffs.'

Eckhart began working as a Freelance Administrative Assistant for Liz Chapman, a Fox Business anchor, in January 2013.

In her original filing, Eckhart described how Henry 'preyed upon, manipulated and groomed' her 'at the young age of 24 by exerting his abuse of power over her and her career'.

She said the incident began when Henry started following her on Twitter sometime in 2014, when she was 24.

Henry contends the first contact he had with Eckhart was actually on December 18, 2013, when she replied to a tweet he had posted about the movie Anchorman 2. Two hours after the Twitter exchange, Henry then reportedly contacted Eckhart through her work email, to which she responded: 'Ha! Big fan of yours....Thanks for the follow :)'.

Eckhart eventually agreed to go out for drinks with him at a hotel bar in 2014, where they reportedly had a consensual sexual encounter, according to Eckhart.

She claims Henry 'ripped off her clothes' and she had sex with him 'fearing that her career would be over if she refused.'

Afterwards, Eckhart claims Henry told her he get her in the room with 'really powerful people', which she said she understood to mean that Henry could help her career.

Later, in September 2015, Eckhart says she was working in the Fox News offices when Henry asked her to put her underwear in an envelope for him to retrieve. Eckhart said she agreed to the request, and was later summoned Henry to meet him at a guest office, in the middle of the day.

It was during this alleged encounter that Eckhart says Henry forced her to perform oral sex on him.

In a court filing, Henry called Eckhart's accusations false and said she 'willingly and enthusiastically' engaged in their 'completely consensual' relationship.

Eckhart said Fox News fired her in June 2020 after she complained about the work environment.

Michael Willemin, a lawyer for Eckhart, said she looked forward to a jury trial.

Areu's lawyer James Vagnini said his client was disappointed and would review whether to amend her complaint.