

Megyn Kelly's Lawyer Set for Friday Showdown With NBC

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Noel Vasquez/Getty Images

Megyn Kelly

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Megyn Kelly's lawyer, Bryan Freedman, one of Hollywood's top talent-side litigators, will meet with NBC News executives in New York as soon as Friday for what are expected to be talks about the terms of her status at NBC News, sources close to the situation tell *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Kelly was not on her 9 a.m. *Today* hour [on Thursday](#) and is not expected to be there on Friday, either. It's increasingly unlikely that she could make a return to NBC News. Freedman was hired late on Wednesday at the suggestion of UTA, say sources.

A key part of his discussion with NBC News executives is expected to involve what Kelly views as some hypocrisy on the part of NBC — that it was OK for a sister property (Bravo) to show a woman dressed in what appeared to be blackface. Kelly and a panel of contributors were talking about *Real Housewives of New York* castmember Luann de Lesseps' Diana Ross costume, which caused a stir earlier this year because de Lesseps appeared to have darkened her skin for the costume, which included a white evening gown and sky-high wig. De Lesseps apologized after the episode aired last spring.

Of course that does not change the fact that Kelly seemed to defend the use of blackface and characterize objections to it as political correctness run amok. Kelly [apologized](#) in an email to her NBC News colleagues on Tuesday, the day the segment aired, and at the top of her show on Wednesday.

It is an extraordinary rupture between a star anchor and the news division that spent lavishly to lure her in the midst of a snowballing reckoning on sexual misconduct by powerful men. Kelly came to NBC News in January 2017, weeks before the inauguration of Donald Trump, with whom she had tangled during the presidential primaries when Trump directed misogynist barbs at her. She became one of the faces of a growing movement of disclosures, writing about harassment at the hands of her Fox News boss Roger Ailes in her 2016 memoir *Settle for More*.

So when the #MeToo movement caught fire after Harvey Weinstein's demise in October 2017, Kelly was able to authentically capitalize on it. Victims of harassment became regular guests on her 9 a.m. *Today* show. And she did not shy away from examining the cases at her own network, booking Matt Lauer accusers and suggesting that the network consent to an outside investigation in determining why Ronan Farrow's reporting on Weinstein did not make it to air.

None of this sat well with executives at NBC News, who were outraged by much of her pointed criticism. Her on-air offer to conduct an interview with Lauer and his accusers in the wake of Lauer's ouster from *Today* amid misconduct allegations was particularly galling to NBC News execs.

But she also brought some baggage with her after 14 years at Fox News. When the network's broadcasts covered the mushrooming scandal, they played video of Kelly from a 2013 installment of her Fox News show telling her guests that "Santa just is white. ... Jesus was a white man, too."

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