

MEDIA

Tucker Carlson, Don Lemon hired the same lawyer after Fox, CNN exits

By [Annabelle Timsit](#) and [Jeremy Barr](#)

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Tucker Carlson hired Los Angeles-based attorney Bryan Freedman after parting ways with Fox News. (Jason Koerner/Getty Images)

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[Tucker Carlson](#) and [Don Lemon](#) have hired the same lawyer, one known for his work on some of the most contentious media lawsuits in recent years, to represent them following their unexpected ousters from Fox and CNN — a sign that the high-profile anchors could be gearing up for a legal battle with their former networks.

Los Angeles-based attorney Bryan Freedman is known as a combative litigator who takes on cases pitting media personalities against major television networks, including for Megyn Kelly and Chris Cuomo.

Neither Carlson nor Lemon have mentioned the reasons for their firing, and it is not clear if they plan to take any legal action. Carlson’s ouster comes after the release of his private communications about former president Donald Trump and Fox’s internal management. Lemon suggested he was unaware that he was going to be fired.

CNN and Fox did not respond to a request for comment. Carlson did not respond to The Washington Post’s request for comment. A representative for Lemon could not be reached for comment.

Freedman, who co-founded Freedman + Taitelman with fellow attorney Michael Taitelman in 1997 to [provide](#) the same “expertise and aggressiveness” as large firms, has a track record of negotiating favorable exit packages for controversial media personalities. The firm’s [website](#) describes Freedman as “the go to lawyer in crisis litigation.”

Freedman represented Kelly, the conservative former Fox News and NBC host, after she was fired from NBC amid a backlash to comments she made about the appropriateness of White people dressing up in blackface for Halloween. Kelly was widely reported to have secured a settlement for just under [half of the \\$69 million](#) remaining on her three-year contract with NBC.

Freedman also helped negotiate a settlement, which [Variety reported](#) to be worth \$10 million, for Chris Harrison, the former host of “The Bachelor” franchise who stepped down after he defended a contestant accused of racial insensitivity. And he represented actress Gabrielle Union, who filed a discrimination, harassment and retaliation complaint after she was fired from NBC’s “America’s Got Talent.” [Union and NBC](#) reached an “amicable resolution” in 2020, but the terms of their agreement were not publicly disclosed.

The lawyer is also representing former CNN anchor Cuomo in his [\\$125 million](#) arbitration demand against CNN, in which Cuomo claimed that the network unlawfully terminated him. [Cuomo was fired in 2021](#) after it emerged that he advised his brother, then-New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, on how to handle a sexual-harassment claim, and after Chris Cuomo was himself accused of sexual misconduct.

[As The Post has reported](#), Carlson’s firing came less than a week after Fox [settled a defamation lawsuit from Dominion Voting Systems](#), which had sued the network for airing false claims that it had conspired to rig the 2020 presidential election, for \$787.5 million.

As part of the discovery process, private messages written by Carlson and other Fox employees were made public, showcasing internal tensions over the decision to call the 2020 presidential election for President Biden and over the subsequent airing of conspiracy theories relating to the election by certain Fox News anchors. The messages also showed [Carlson disparaging Trump](#) in private, even as he praised the former president in public.

Carlson has not yet spoken publicly about his ouster. But [The Post reported](#) that he learned that he was being fired in a phone call Monday morning. Fox executives also appeared not to have given him a chance to say goodbye to his sizable audience: In its Monday [statement](#) announcing that Fox and Carlson had “agreed to part ways,” the network said that Carlson’s last show happened Friday.

Lemon’s departure from CNN comes as the network is overhauling its programming in a bid to improve ratings. The show Lemon co-anchored, “CNN This Morning,” had been [struggling to attract more viewers](#) since it debuted in November.

He also faced criticism after he said during a discussion about competency tests for older [presidential candidates](#) that Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley “isn’t in her prime, sorry — when a woman is considered to be in her prime in her 20s and 30s and maybe 40s.”

He took time off-air but soon returned. At the time, CNN chief executive Chris Licht said in a memo that the network should hold people accountable but also foster “a culture in which people can own, learn and grow from their mistakes.”

Yet Monday’s announcement of [Lemon’s departure](#) from the network did not go smoothly. After the news came out, the former prime-time host [said](#) he was “stunned” by CNN’s decision and claimed that network leaders did not tell him directly that he had been fired.

Don Lemon

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terminated by CNN. I am stunned. After 17 years at CNN I would have thought that someone in management would have had the decency to tell me directly. At no time was I ever given any indication that I would not be able to continue to do the work I have loved at the network. It is clear that there are some larger issues at play. With that said, I want to

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[CNN called](#) Lemon’s statement “inaccurate” and said “he was offered an opportunity to meet with management but instead released a statement on Twitter.”

Lemon also alluded to “larger issues at play” in his firing but did not elaborate.

Jeremy Barr, Sarah Ellison, Paul Farhi and Elahe Izadi contributed to this report.