

# [***NBC News ousts Ronna McDaniel after network's anchors launch unprecedented on-air rebellion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BN1-MVJ1-DY7V-G053-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

New York (CNN) &#8212; NBC News on Tuesday ousted former Republican National Committee chair Ronna McDaniel, just days after her hiring as a paid political analyst sparked intense backlash from the network's top television anchors over McDaniel's role in subverting the 2020 election and attacks on the press.

"There is no doubt that the last several days have been difficult for the News Group," NBCUniversal News Group President Cesar Conde said in a memo to staff. "After listening to the legitimate concerns of many of you, I have decided that Ronna McDaniel will not be an NBC News contributor."

"I want to personally apologize to our team members who felt we let them down," Conde continued. "While this was a collective recommendation by some members of our leadership team, I approved it and take full responsibility for it."

Ahead of the network's decision, McDaniel spent the day Tuesday interviewing attorneys in preparation for a potential legal battle with NBC, a person familiar with the matter told CNN. Creative Artists Agency, the talent agency that brokered McDaniel's deal with NBC, also parted ways with her, the person said.

The reversal comes after journalists and anchors at both NBC and its cable news sibling MSNBC publicly denounced the decision to hire McDaniel as a paid analyst in a stunning and unprecedented on-air rebuke of network brass that has embarrassed the Peacock Network.

McDaniel, who recently stepped down from the RNC under pressure from former President Donald Trump, was involved in attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

As head of the RNC, she was involved in a phone call in 2020 to pressure Michigan county officials not to certify the vote from the Detroit area, where Joe Biden had a commanding lead. McDaniel [*told the officials*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/22/politics/trump-recorded-pressuring-michigan-canvassers/index.html), regarding the certification: "Do not sign it. ... We will get you attorneys."

In the years since, McDaniel continued to claim that the election had "problems" and that Biden did not legitimately win the election, fanning the flames of election denialism.

NBC's announcement Friday that it had hired McDaniel was quickly met with alarm by the network's journalists. The revolt spilled into public view on Sunday when McDaniel appeared on "Meet the Press" with moderator Kristen Welker in her first interview since she was hired by the network. Welker disclosed that the interview had been scheduled to take place prior to NBC announcing McDaniel would become a paid contributor for the network, stating that she had no involvement in her hiring.

Following the interview, Chuck Todd, NBC News' chief political analyst, delivered a stinging on-air criticism of NBC executives for their decision to hire McDaniel, telling Welker, "I think our bosses owe you an apology for putting you in this situation."

"There's a reason a lot of journalists at NBC News are uncomfortable with this," Todd said, explaining that under McDaniel, the RNC engaged in "gaslighting" and "character assassination" when dealing with the news media.

The following day, MSNBC hosts Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough joined Todd in protesting the decision on their program "Morning Joe."

"To be clear, we believe NBC News should seek out conservative Republican voices to provide balance in their election coverage, but it should be conservative Republicans, not a person who used her position of power to be an anti-democracy election denier," Brzezinski said. "We hope NBC will reconsider its decision. It goes without saying that she will not be a guest on 'Morning Joe' in her capacity as a paid contributor."

Nicolle Wallace, host of MSNBC's "Deadline: White House," later joined in the rebuke, saying on her program that the network's decision to hire McDaniel was nothing short of a potential threat to democracy.

"NBC News is, either wittingly or unwittingly, teaching election deniers that what they can do stretches well beyond appearing on our air and interviews to peddle lies about the sanctity and integrity of our elections," Wallace told viewers.

Rachel Maddow - the network's biggest star - later devoted the first half-hour of her prime-time program to the controversy, saying the decision to hire McDaniel was "inexplicable." Maddow took issue with McDaniel's long track record of demonizing the news media, labeling the press as "fake news," and launching ugly attacks on NBC News journalists and MSNBC hosts.

"We do not take it personally when we get attacked, when they say they want to put us on trial and execute us for treason," she said.

"And so I want to associate myself with all my colleagues at MSNBC and NBC News who have voiced loud and principled objections to our company for putting on the payroll someone who hasn't just attacked us as journalists, but someone who is part of an ongoing project to get rid of our system of government," she said of McDaniel. "Someone who is still trying to convince Americans that this election stuff doesn't really work. That this last election wasn't a real result. That American elections are fraudulent."

The on-air revolt ensnared NBC's top leaders, including NBCUniversal News Group chair Cesar Conde, NBC News president Rebecca Blumenstein and senior vice president of ***politics*** Carrie Budoff Brown, who were responsible for McDaniel's hiring. MSNBC president Rashida Jones also did not object to the decision, people familiar with the matter said.

In the wake of Conde's announcement to sever ties with McDaniel, MSNBC host Joy Reid and Maddow addressed the reversal on the network's air, praising the move as "bold" and "strong."

"I think it is a show of strength and a show of respect for the people who work at this company and make us who we are," Maddow said. "That leadership was willing to change on this, I'm grateful to them."

By Oliver Darcy and Jon Passantino, CNN

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