



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 5, 2021

Cuomo Sex Harassment Victim: “I Have to Get Out of This Room.... I Was Terrified.”

The second of three women who have accused New York Governor Andrew Cuomo of sex harassment — and what might be sexual assault [in two](#) of the three cases — retold her story on national television last night.

Charlotte Bennett’s account of Cuomo’s twisted come-ons [appeared in the Times](#) on Saturday. But last night, the nation saw Bennett tell her story to Norah O’Donnell of CBS News.

Cuomo, Bennett said, harassed her with perverted conversations that suggested he wanted her for just one thing: sex.



YouTube

The Interview

Bennet told O’Donnell that the undeserved accolades Cuomo received for handling the China Virus crisis in New York had emboldened him.

“I think he felt he was untouchable,” she said.

Bennett also described Cuomo’s incessant discussion, on May 15, of a sexual assault she suffered:

So he goes, you were raped, you were raped, you were raped, and abused, and assaulted.

On June 5, he called her into his office for “dictation,” and told her to turn off her tape recorder. “He explained at that point that he is looking for a girlfriend, he’s lonely, he’s tired,” she said.

Then Cuomo began delving into Bennett’s sex assault again. “He asked if I had trouble enjoying being with someone because of my trauma,” [she told](#) O’Donnell.

“The governor asked me if I was sensitive to intimacy,” she said.

And as [Bennett told](#) the *Times*, the 63-year-old Cuomo asked whether Bennett, 25, was interested in older men: “He asked me if age difference mattered. He also explained that he was fine with anyone over 22.”

O’Donnell asked Bennett what she was thinking.

Replied Bennett:

I thought, he’s trying to sleep with me. The governor is trying to sleep with me. And, I’m deeply uncomfortable, and I have to get out of this room as soon as possible.



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Charlotte Bennett, a former staff member for New York Governor Cuomo, details what she says was clear sexual harassment by the governor.

"I thought he's trying to sleep with me. The governor's trying to sleep with me," Bennett said. pic.twitter.com/y65zdmRJxI

— Norah O'Donnell 📱 (@NorahODonnell) [March 4, 2021](#)

Bennett then repeated why she thought Cuomo was trying to have sex with her: "Without explicitly saying it, he implied to me that I was old enough for him and he was lonely."

CBS News verified Bennett's story with text messages Bennett wrote to a friend right after Cuomo's perverted banter.

After that meeting, Bennett felt shame, [she tearfully told](#) O'Donnell:

I really was uncomfortable and understood that my boss was asking these questions, so I was trying to answer them. I feel like people put the onus on the woman to shut that conversation down. And by answering, I was somehow engaging in that or enabling it, when in fact, I was just terrified.

After Bennett reported the encounter, Cuomo's protectors hustled her to another job.

The other two women to accuse Cuomo are Anna Ruch, [who says](#) Cuomo forcibly kissed her at a wedding reception, a possible assault, [and Lindsey Boylan](#), a married mom who also received one of Cuomo's bold but uninvited busses. Boylan tweeted her accusations in December before writing about them in detail last week.

Yes, [@NYGovCuomo](#) sexually harassed me for years. Many saw it, and watched.

I could never anticipate what to expect: would I be grilled on my work (which was very good) or harassed about my looks. Or would it be both in the same conversation? This was the way for years.

— Lindsey Boylan (@LindseyBoylan) [December 13, 2020](#)

Aides Jumping Meanwhile

Bennett's revelations were apparently enough to send top aides running, [Politico reported](#) on Wednesday.

"At least two top aides to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo are leaving his office as the governor faces allegations of sexual harassment from former aides and a federal probe into his administration's handling of nursing home deaths," the website reported.

One is Gareth Rhodes, a senior adviser on Cuomos' China Virus task force. Another is First Deputy Press Secretary Will Burns, *Politico* reported:

Those departures are just two of at least six that have been submitted among executive chamber staff within the past week, some of which were in the works before the allegations against the governor emerged last week, according two people familiar with the moves.



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Those resignations also foreshadow more staff who might jump ship as loyalists reconcile the behavior that has been reported by their colleagues and peers with the governor they thought they knew.

Rhodes' wife, Alexa Kissinger, on Monday offered public support for Anna Ruch — a woman who detailed an uncomfortable interaction with Cuomo that was caught on camera — in a post on Twitter, and also shared criticism of the governor's action. It's a sharp turn; Cuomo officiated Kissinger and Rhodes' wedding in 2019....

"I'm furious with the man," said one former Cuomo aide, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "We're afraid this is going to undo 12 years of really good work. Love him or hate him, New York is a different state under Andrew."

Indeed it is.

New York now has a much lower population of the elderly thanks to [Cuomo's order](#) to put China Virus patients in nursing homes. And lonely women can head to the Empire State in the sure knowledge that Cuomo is there if they need him.

After all, he's lonely, too.



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