

People EXCLUSIVE

# Gabrielle Union Had 'a Very Tough Week' Amid AGT Scandal but Is 'Open to Continuing a Dialogue'

"It was a very tough week for Gabrielle, but she's doing fine," says a source close to Gabrielle Union

By **Emily Strohm** December 11, 2019 08:30 AM



It's been nearly three weeks since news broke that *America's Got Talent* judges Gabrielle Union and Julianne Hough were abruptly fired from the NBC reality competition show, but the drama surrounding their controversial exit is far from over.

"It was a very tough week for Gabrielle, but she's doing fine," a source close to Union tells PEOPLE. "She's sticking up for what she believes in, but is also open to continuing a dialogue."



PHOTO: TRAE PATTON/NBCU PHOTO BANK/NBCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES VIA GETTY

The actress, 47, revealed on Dec. 4 that she sat down with NBC and *America's Got Talent* production company following reports that she expressed concerns over racially insensitivity and a toxic culture at the show, which is produced by Fremantle and Syco Entertainment, show creator Simon Cowell's company.

"We had a lengthy 5-hour, and what I thought to be, productive meeting yesterday," Union wrote on Twitter. "I was able to again, express my unfiltered truth. I led with transparency and my desire and hope for real change."

According to *Variety*, Union claims she and Hough were also subject to "excessive notes" on their physical appearance, with Union being told her hairstyles were "too black" for *AGT's* audience. Union has not yet released an official statement about the allegations. Hough, who denied having a negative experience on the show, spoke out in support of Union Dec. 5.



Gabrielle Union PHOTO: RICH POLK/GETTY IMAGES FOR SONY PICTURES TELEVISION

Show creator and judge Cowell has reportedly enlisted tenacious longtime Hollywood litigator Larry Stein as his legal representation. (Union is working with Megyn Kelly's former attorney Bryan Freedman.)

Still, many involved are hopeful for a positive outcome.

"The initial conversation was candid and productive," an NBC spokesperson said in a statement to PEOPLE about their sit-down with Union.

"While there will be a further investigation to get a deeper understanding of the facts, we are working with Gabrielle to come to a positive resolution," said the spokesperson.

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