

# Gabrielle Union Says Her *America's Got Talent* Exit 'Process Was Really Brutal'

The actress previously alleged that she was terminated from the show after just one season due to "her refusal to remain silent in the face of a toxic culture"

By **Nicholas Rice**

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**Gabrielle Union** is continuing to speak out about her exit from *America's Got Talent*.

On Sunday, the *Being Mary Jane* actress, 47, opened up about her experience during the "Minding Her Business" panel for the 2020 *American Black Film Festival*, where she revealed that her most difficult business dealing to date was being fired from the hit NBC talent competition series, according to *USA Today*.

"Probably the *AGT* of it all was so surprising and so heartbreaking and so frustrating and so unnecessary," she shared. "That would be probably the hardest part [of my time in the industry]."

Per the publication, Union also noted that other difficult parts of the behind-the-scenes drama on the show led to her "feeling like such a public flogging and just standing in my truth and standing on the side of employee rights and knowing there's a better way of doing business."

"But that whole process was really brutal and knowing that I brought my team into that, it just sucked," she added.



Gabrielle Union PHOTO: ALLEN BEREZOVSKY/GETTY

Last November, it was confirmed that new *AGT* judges Union and **Julianne Hough** would not be returning for the show's 15th season, which premiered earlier this year.

Days later, a report by *Variety* claimed that Union had expressed concerns over alleged racial insensitivity on set, and that both women said they were subjected to "excessive notes" on their physical appearance.



Gabrielle Union on AGT PHOTO: TRAE PATTON/NBCU PHOTO BANK/NBCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES VIA GETTY

Union and Hough's exits from the show launched an internal investigation of NBC and production companies Fremantle and Syco Entertainment, and Union has since taken legal action against the two production companies, the media conglomerate, and *AGT* creator **Simon Cowell** through attorney Bryan Freedman.

"Gabrielle Union informed NBC of racially offensive conduct during the taping of *America's Got Talent*, NBC did not 'stand' with her in 'outrage at acts of racism.' Instead, NBC did not care enough to either promptly investigate Ms. Union's complaints or even ask HR to get involved," Freedman said in a previous statement to PEOPLE. "Rather, NBC stood against her and directed its 'outrage' at Ms. Union for whistleblowing about the racially offensive conduct she experienced while working for NBC on *America's Got Talent*."

NBC previously responded to Union's complaint, saying, "The allegation that anyone involved in this process threatened Ms. Union is categorically untrue."

They added: "We took Ms. Union's concerns seriously, and engaged an outside investigator who found an overarching culture of diversity on the show. NBCUniversal remains committed to creating an inclusive and supportive working environment where people of all backgrounds are treated with respect."

In her complaint, Union alleged that she was terminated from the show after just one season due to "her refusal to remain silent in the face of a toxic culture at *AGT* that included racist jokes, racist performances, sexual orientation discrimination, and excessive focus on female judges' appearances, including race-related comments."



Gabrielle Union PHOTO: RODIN ECKENROTH/FILMMAGIC

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