

# Megyn Kelly No Longer at CAA (Exclusive)

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Jamie McCarthy/Getty Images

Megyn Kelly

The 'Today' host has also hired a top Hollywood litigator, signaling Kelly could be preparing for a fight with NBC leading to her exit from the network.

Megyn Kelly's team of representatives has undergone some major changes in the wake of her controversial comments about wearing blackface.

CAA is no longer working with Kelly, *The Hollywood Reporter* learned on Wednesday. CAA declined to give a reason for the split, but a source says the *Megyn Kelly Today* host sought new representation because the agency also reps NBC News president Noah Oppenheim.

To replace CAA, UTA co-president Jay Sures had been in talks to sign Kelly and had been courting her before Tuesday's blackface backlash, in which Kelly said on her 9 a.m. show that she [didn't understand why people couldn't wear blackface](#) on Halloween. Sures is said to have backed out of representing Kelly on Wednesday amid the controversy. A source close to the situation says Sures' decision came after he made at least one call to NBC News president Noah Oppenheim and had set a meeting with NBC for Friday on Kelly's behalf.

Then later on Wednesday, Kelly hired attorney Bryan Freedman, one of Hollywood's top talent-side litigators. The move is a sign that she is gearing up for a fight with NBC that could lead to her exit. She [will not appear on the Thursday or Friday episodes](#) of her show, according to sources.

The drama comes a day after the host of *Today's* 9 o'clock hour [defended blackface](#) during a segment on Halloween costumes, claiming that the practice, which finds its roots in 19th century racist minstrel shows, was acceptable when she was a kid. Online reaction was swift, with Hollywood figures from many races, including Padma Lakshmi, Patton Oswalt and Roy Wood Jr., criticizing the stance.

A few hours later on Tuesday, Kelly [sent an internal e-mail](#) to the company, explaining that she had now learned that "the history of blackface in our culture is abhorrent." Her NBC colleagues did not shy away from the subject, covering the incident both on *NBC Nightly News With Lester Holt* and in late night. "Say what you want about Megyn Kelly, but she looks great for [being 200 years old](#)," cracked *Late Night* host Seth Meyers, while writer Amber Ruffin added, "For someone with a morning show, Megyn Kelly, you sure are late as hell."

The fallout continued on Wednesday morning, with *Today's* flagship edition weighing in with a reported segment by Morgan Radford that noted Kelly had previously insisted on her Fox News show that both Santa Claus and Jesus Christ are white. "The fact is, while she apologized to the staff, she owes a bigger apology to folks of color around the country, because this is a history, going back to the 1830s minstrel shows, to demean and denigrate a race," said Al Roker. Added Craig Melvin, "It was an opportunity for us to learn a little bit more about blackface, but I think a lot of people knew about blackface before yesterday."

*THR* reported earlier on Wednesday that *Megyn Kelly Today* is [expected to conclude](#) at the end of the year. Sources said Kelly had already been meeting with NBC News executives in recent weeks, expressing a desire to return to news and political coverage. Then at a company town hall on Wednesday, NBC News chairman Andy Lack condemned Kelly's blackface comments and said that the company would "sort through" matters with her. Lack's comments struck many at NBC News as an extraordinary rebuke of a top network talent. She had been a coveted hire for the network when it lured her from Fox News in early 2017 with a deal reportedly worth nearly \$20 million a year. Sources say it is now increasingly likely that Kelly will leave NBC.

Castmembers from *House of Cards* also [pulled out of an appearance](#) on *Megyn Kelly Today* scheduled for next week.

Kelly had previously been represented by UTA via its 2014 [acquisition of broadcast news powerhouse N.S. Bienstock](#). She left the agency to sign with CAA the following year, when her Fox News show *The Kelly File* was second only to network companion *The O'Reilly Factor* as the highest-rated program on cable news. She had developed a reputation of being the rare political crossover talent, able to cater to Fox News' red-state viewer base while occasionally standing up to its sacred cows, including then-network chief Roger Ailes and then-presidential candidate Donald Trump.

**Oct. 24, 8:51 p.m.** Edited to clarify UTA's involvement.

**Oct. 24, 9:48 p.m.** Added Kelly's new legal representation.