


Black Trans Actor Suni Reid Claims They Were Cut From ‘Hamilton’ for Demanding Gender-Neutral Dressing Room

 [thedailybeast.com/black-trans-actor-suni-reid-claims-they-were-cut-from-hamilton-for-demanding-gender-neutral-dressing-room](https://www.thedailybeast.com/black-trans-actor-suni-reid-claims-they-were-cut-from-hamilton-for-demanding-gender-neutral-dressing-room)

October 13, 2021

Black Trans Actor Claims They Were Cut From ‘Hamilton’ for Demanding Gender-Neutral Dressing Room

A transgender cast member of the hit musical *Hamilton*—which has been widely held up as a champion of diversity—alleges they were harassed by other performers and ultimately booted from the production after requesting a gender-neutral dressing room.

Suni Reid, a Black trans performer, made the damning claims in a [federal civil rights complaint](#) filed Wednesday against the musical’s parent company, outlining how they were allegedly harassed and retaliated against while working on the Los Angeles production.

Reid says they repeatedly faced discrimination from other cast and crew members—including a performer who told them to “pray the gay away”—were purposely misgendered, and physically threatened while in the men’s dressing room.

They complained to management multiple times, but nothing was done, according to the filing with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Eventually, Reid took to social media to speak out about their experience with the majority white production team.

Michele Large, Reid’s agent, also contacted *Hamilton* management and wrote to them that “living one’s life in accordance with one’s gender identity is often critical to mental health.” She continued, “Suni feels strongly that returning to the theatre and rehearsals to the same dressing room set up as in the past where they continue to separate the ensemble according to gender is anxiety provoking and only exacerbates other potential adverse outcomes for the performer.”

Reid joined *Hamilton* as an ensemble member in 2017 and moved up the ranks to play various roles. When it was time to discuss their contract renewal around May 2021, Reid requested to have a gender-neutral dressing room, pointing out that other castmates had expressed interest in the idea as well. The *Hamilton* team suggested using a sheet or curtain to create a gender-neutral space within the men’s dressing room—but Reid said that idea wasn’t adequate and doesn’t comply with [California’s transgender regulations](#), the complaint states.

After that, Reid claims they were retaliated against. *Hamilton* suspended their contract negotiation talks, and asserted that Reid was posting “problematic” social media posts that stalled the contract renewal process. As a result, Reid was unable to attend rehearsals and performances as their contract sat in limbo, according to the complaint.

“Hamilton’s attacking response in labeling Mx. Reid as ‘problematic’ not only perpetuates harmful stereotypes, it betrays the Company’s reflexive retaliatory impulse in response to Mx. Reid daring to question Hamilton’s social equity bona fides and speaking up against mistreatment based on their race, sexual orientation/LGBTQ+ status, gender, and gender identity,” the complaint says.

A cast member with a private dressing room offered to share their changing area, and eventually a gender-neutral dressing area was established at the Pantages Theater in Los Angeles, meeting legal requirements. But Reid claims *Hamilton* refused to give up their fight, and ultimately shut Reid out by ending their contract.

“Despite the fact that Mx. Reid desperately wished to return to work and performing and was excited to use the new dressing room that had been set up, Hamilton terminated its contract discussions with Mx. Reid and would not bring them back,” the complaint states. “The only explanation is that Mx. Reid was punished for making legally protected complaints and requests to the Company.”

A Hamilton spokesperson denied the allegations, insisting Reid “was a valued cast member.”

“We offered them a contract to return to *Hamilton* with terms responsive to their requests. We have not discriminated or retaliated against Suni. Since the shutdown, our organization has taken care of our community,” the statement said. “We have treated Suni with the same respect and consideration as all the company members of Hamilton. Specifically, we have given Suni direct financial support, paid for their health insurance, and paid for their housing. We wish Suni well in their future endeavors.”

According to Reid’s complaint, they aren’t the only cast or crew member to make complaints during their stint with *Hamilton*.

A cast member of color was allegedly fired from the production after complaining about the hair styling process. She claimed there were not enough people of color on the hair team to ensure their wigs would be of decent quality after being used for weekly performances. After she was let go, *Hamilton* said that it would look into purchasing more products for textured hair, according to the complaint.

Another *Hamilton* cast member who supported Reid’s claims of racial and gender bias said the musical’s white director critiqued the ensemble for sounding too “urban” while singing during rehearsals. The performer said that the production overall “is, without question, a Boys’ Club rooted in toxic masculinity and heteronormativity.”

“Publicly, Hamilton is a beacon of diversity and appears committed to causes seeking social justice and harmony,” said Reid’s attorneys, Lawrence M. Pearson and Lindsay M. Goldbrum, in a statement. “Behind the curtain, however, the Company’s management will force out a Black, transgender cast member simply because they stood up for themselves and advocated for a more equitable workplace, and therefore called that public image into question. We look forward to upholding Mx. Reid’s rights and hope this is a wake-up call for the theatre industry about the systemic inequities that persist even at its greatest heights.”