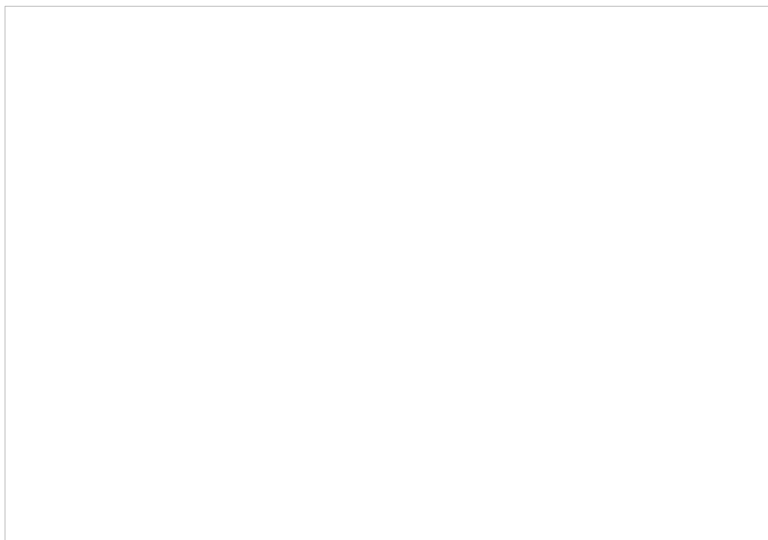


# Abdul Mysteries Unveiled, Beckham & Perry added as American Idol Jurists

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**Fight over money and emotion**

*By Jeffrey Jolson*

**HOLLYWOOD ([RPRN/Hollywood Today](#)) 8/7/2009**—The abrupt “resignation” of Paula Abdul from No. 1-rated American Idol without explanation is now becoming clear, as are her replacements.

Fox Network said today that singers Victoria “Posh Spice” Beckham, and pop singer Kate Perry were among temps up for a lucrative chair at the American Idol judges’ table, which opens one up for as many ancillary opportunities like endorsements (with Fox OK) as the basic salary does.

Beckham was a bust on NBC with her own reality show on NBC, yet American Idol with all the other talent is a different story than one on you posh life with David.

“Idol” producers renewed the contract this week of songwriter Kara DioGuardi, who was added to the judging panel this season as a fourth judge before Abdul abdicated. Simon Cowell and Randy Jackson are still under contract and host Ryan Seacrest also will be returning.

“We very much wanted her to return,” said Peter Rice, chairman of entertainment at Fox, about Abdul, “We made an offer that we feel was very fair. It was a substantial raise. It was not our choice,” he told reporters. Yet it was not all Abdul’s sole choice either. Seacrest denied he was given a \$15 million yearly contract, but since the show earns many times that it is not out of line. Yet reports say Abdul was incensed as she earned much less.

Paula was reportedly offered \$4M a year, but is holding out for \$10M as she feels her contribution to AI helped make it what it is: the most lucrative show ever on television, not just because it is No. 1, but because as a reality/variety program, it costs relatively little to make over hourlong drama or action series.

Yet Fox appeared to cut the mike on any further talks with Abdul, who surprised many announcing - in a Tweet no less - that she was lowering her octave on American Idol after seven years when she failed to secure a new contract with a big enough pay raise.

Asked whether there was still a chance that the popular but volatile Abdul might still find a way back to the show, Rice told reporters gathered at an event showcasing new programs: “Our understanding is that we have concluded the negotiations and Paula has announced she is not coming back.”

However former Idol executive producer Nigel Lythgoe said he held out some hope for a comeback.

“I still don’t know that she is going to leave ‘Idol’. Until ‘Idol’ goes on the air there are always opportunities for renegotiations,” Lythgoe told reporters separately. He said he may meet Abdul this weekend to talk about

opportunities with his own TV contest show on Fox “So You Think You Can Dance.”

“I’ve been trying to get her since season one (of “So You Think You Can Dance)”, Lythgoe told Reuters.

Yet reports of Abdul’s frustration with DioGuardia, and impending other potential replacement, as well as longtime with Cowell, a founder of the show, were starting the fray the nerves of the singer and longtime bubbly personality among the judges. She says Cowell misses her already.

Those on the other side hinted at her drinking, which seemed fairly normal with an occasional hangover-bringer, and to what a volatile side that led one Idol staffer into calling her an “emotional tweet.”

Auditions for the ninth season of “American Idol” begin on Aug 9 and Rice said that producers were talking to several female pop stars and performers to fill guest judge spots.

He said Perry, who enjoyed a massive global hit with “I Kissed a Girl”, and Beckham, also known as Posh Spice, had already agreed to take part in the audition rounds. None of the guests are expected to take on the judging role permanently.

“Between now and January (when the show airs) we will come up with a permanent solution on what we will do ... Obviously there is going to be a different dynamic (and) there is something exciting about that,” Rice said.

“I’ll miss nurturing all the new talent, but most of all being a part of a show that I helped from day 1 become an international phenomenon,” said Abdul, who was known for finding something positive in almost every performance.

“What I want to say most, is how much I appreciate the undying support and enormous love that you have showered upon me.”

Fox and the show’s producers FremantleMedia North America and 19

Entertainment said they were “saddened” that Abdul would not be returning to the show as she had been “an important part of the ‘American Idol’ family over the last eight seasons.”

“While Paula will not be continuing with us, she’s a tremendous talent and we wish her the best,” they said in a joint statement, also giving no reason for her departure.

### **About the author:**

Jeffrey Jolson is Hollywood Today founding editor-in-chief and a RushPRnews partner and contributor since 2006. Jeffrey, of the Al Jolson family, also founded HollywoodReporter.com and Grammy.com. Hollywood Today reporters have written for Vanity Fair, Rolling Stone, Forbes, Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, the New York Times, the Boston Globe, The San Francisco Chronicle, AP, E!, Popular Science and Popular Mechanics.

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