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Malik Yoba Fired For Drugs? 'Empire' Star Fights Back Against Substance Abuse Rumors

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Malik Yoba is fighting back against rumors that he was fired from *Empire* for drugs, taking to Twitter to clear his name.

Yoba's character, Vernon Turner, was killed off in the show's blockbuster two-hour season finale. Yoba said the decision came from Fox executives, who said a major character needed to die in the blockbuster two-hour episode.

Malik Yoba was reportedly fired from *Empire* for drugs, with insiders saying his substance abuse was causing problems on the set and eventually prompted Fox execs to step in.

Malik said he learned from series co-creator Lee Daniels that word came down from Fox that **Vernon Turner would be killed off.**

"Lee called me and told me," Yoba told *TMZ*. "He said that, um, someone at Fox said that someone needed to die in the season finale. So, I was like 'Word?'"

Malik was diplomatic about the decision, however.

"To this day, I don't know — in the infinite wisdom — who thought it was the best approach, but someone did. I never got a clear answer on it. But it wasn't about the work or ethics or work ethics. It was the plot line.

"Vernon's gone, but Malik lives on. And — as I've told you, Chuck, in private — it's a great opportunity to push forward the work that I'm doing in terms of building my own empire, if you will."

But a source close to the show said that Malik Yoba was fired for drugs, with his substance abuse catching the attention of higher-ups at the network.

The insider spoke on the rumors.

"Malik Yoba is back on drugs and he was making everyone on the set uncomfortable. One star of the show even threatened to quit during the 10th episode, but then they upped their pay to convince them to stay. Fox caught wind of what was going on and gave Lee Daniels an ultimatum: 'You tell Malik he's fired or we will.' Fox also threatened to shelve the show indefinitely if Daniels didn't do as he was told. So he did, and the rest is history."

Despite the now widespread rumor, there is no verification that Malik Yoba was fired for drugs. And the official word from *Empire* show-runners was that Vernon Turner was killed off as part of a planned shake-up at the end of the first season, with neither Yoba nor Lee Daniels speaking publicly about the rumor. Read more at [here](#).

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Nathan Francis

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