

More Than a 15 Year Wait for Justice

by Louis Gabriele

The NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) reported Friday January 10 that CNN has agreed to pay back-pay to hundreds of unionized broadcast cameramen and technicians, who were always represented by NABET-CWA (National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-Communication Workers of America) Local 11 (New York) and Local 31 (Washington DC). The workers provided the video and sound for many of CNN's most recognized programs, including *Larry King Live* and *Lou Dobbs Tonight*. To settle the charges that it violated federal labor law, when it replaced these workers more than 15 years ago, CNN agreed to pay the settlement of **\$76 million**.

The dispute began in 2003 when CNN ended its contract with Team Video Services and announced that the network would hire its own employees to provide the same services. CNN wanted to operate as a nonunion workplace.

In 2008, an Administrative Law Judge of the National Labor Relations Board issued a landmark decision against CNN America, Inc. The Judge found that CNN engaged in: *"widespread and egregious misconduct, demonstrating a flagrant and general disregard for employee rights"*.

In 2017, a panel of the Washington D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals adopted the majority of the Board's findings and enforced the Board's order that CNN *"cease and desist from refusing to recognize and bargain with the unions"*.

In 2020, congratulations are in order to the team of negotiators that had the perseverance to hang in there and to continue the fight for justice.

"After more than 15 years, this settlement agreement finally delivers justice for workers who experienced serious hardship in their lives due to CNN's union-busting practices." In NABET-CWA President Charlie Braico's words, "This incredible settlement in workers' favor should send a very clear message to CNN and to other employers that union-busting is illegal and has consequences."

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