



Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild @ RFA

April 28, 2010

GUILD CHALLENGES TWO DISCHARGES BOTH CASES SCHEDULED FOR ARITRATION

The Guild has filed for two arbitrations, claiming RFA improperly discharged a Cantonese broadcaster and a Mandarin service web editor.

Cantonese broadcaster He Shan was discharged in February after two Chinese bloggers began attacking his reporting. He Shan had covered the bloggers' meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton January 21, providing a video of the meeting that was posted on the RFA web site. He also wrote a story about the meeting. All his reporting was edited and approved by his service chief.

Later that night, the bloggers began attacking He Shan on Tweeter, accusing him of everything from "hocus pocus" to misquoting them. After being alerted by his service chief, He Shan began trying to contact the bloggers to try to determine what the problem was. He called them repeatedly and then sent Tweets trying to clarify the situation.

A month after the exchange, RFA fired He Shan, claiming insubordination and violation of RFA's Code of Journalistic Ethics and conflict of interest policy. RFA hasn't explained why it took a month to come up with the grounds for discharge.

Cantonese service director Shiny Li claims she told He Shan not to try to resolve the issue with the bloggers. He Shan says just the opposite.

His arbitration is scheduled for July.

In the second case, Mandarin web editor Yao Xie Chiu was let go in November after RFA claimed she quit. Her alleged resignation came during a one-on-one meeting with Human Resources Director Alan Tanenbaum.

Chiu was upset because she had just been notified of a job performance discipline stemming from an incident two months earlier. She went to meet with Tanenbaum to discuss the discipline.

During the meeting Tanenbaum claims she resigned, though he concedes she didn't give a date for her alleged resignation. RFA then unilaterally declared her employment had ended — though they didn't tell her.

Chiu says she never resigned, and showed up for work the next day only to find her computer removed from her desk. She was then escorted out of the building.

Her arbitration is scheduled for mid May.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A UNION REPRESENTATIVE DURING ANY MEETING THAT COULD LEAD TO DISCIPLINE. IF HR CALLS YOU IN, HR IS REQUIRED TO TELL YOU OF YOUR RIGHT TO A UNION REPRESENTATIVE