RIGHTS.
He defends ours.
Nissan: respect his.


Chip has a son, Tyler Wells, age 18, and a daughter, Ferrah Wells, age 9. Chip is currently pursuing a degree in Homeland Security at East Mississippi Community College. Chip is a veteran of the U.S. Army and the Alaska Army National Guard. In the wake of the tragic events of 9/11, Chip returned to military service in 2001. He currently serves as a first lieutenant in the Mississippi Army National Guard and has done tours of duty in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2013, Chip was awarded the Distinguished Service Award during half-time of the East Mississippi Community College homecoming football game. Through the Shriners, Chip has been involved in community service and fundraising for children with cleft palate. Chip is also a member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA).

**Chip’s union activism at Nissan**

Chip is a key leader and has emerged as a top spokesperson for the effort to organize a union at Nissan. Along with hundreds of Nissan coworkers, he joined the UAW Fair Election Committee, a group of Nissan workers seeking to form a union at Nissan in order to address, among other things, issues of health and safety and temporary work.


- The story created quite a buzz and became the talk of the plant. Chip received a lot of congratulations from co-workers for having the courage to speak out on television.

**Nissan’s retaliates against Chip for union activism**

Prior to the broadcast of this news story, Chip was never disciplined during his more than ten and a half years with Nissan. In the eight days following the broadcast of the local television interview, Chip was the target of a series of disciplinary notices.
• On the shift immediately following the airing of the Channel 16 story, Chip was issued verbal warnings for quality and a “verbal outburst.” Though Chip was told the warnings were documented, he was not provided a copy. At a later date, Chip was told that Nissan rescinded one of these warnings.

• Soon after, Chip was confronted by a manager and told he could not distribute union literature in an employee break room before the start of his shift.

• Days later Chip was issued an unexcused tardy.

None of these actions were warranted, and all of them were unlawful.

**Nissan’s harassment goes too far**

Having gone from an employee with no disciplinary record in over ten and a half years to being singled out for multiple infractions in a matter of mere days, Chip concluded that he was being targeted for speaking in support of the union.

Chip could no longer endure the environment of persistent harassment and bullying that Nissan management had created since the airing of the Channel 16 news story.

- As a combat veteran, Chip suffers from readjustment disorder with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Nissan is aware of his condition.
- Moreover, Nissan’s treatment of Chip sent a message to the rest of the workforce about what happens to union supporters by making an example of him, arguably one of the most well-known union supporters in the plant.

On November 12, 2013, Chip told a Nissan HR representative that he could not work in the hostile environment being created by management. Upon reporting this to HR, his badge was taken, and Chip was escorted out of the plant by security.

Chip began a medical leave, but was denied Short Term Disability.

Chip also filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board, alleging that Nissan unlawfully discriminated against him and interfered with his right to engage in pro-union activity.

**Disparaging “mug shot” posted**

Chip’s doctor cleared him to return to work on January 6. Chip made it clear that he was ready to return to work as soon as Nissan would allow him to do so.

On January 13, 2014, Chip’s coworkers contacted him to let him know that posted in the security office at the plant gates was a black and white photograph of Chip, resembling a mug shot. Even more outrageous is that the picture had been defaced so that Chip appeared to have a cross on his forehead and two tear-drop shaped tattoos, common among gang members and prison inmates.
On January 14, Nissan told Chip to report to the plant. There he was questioned by a Nissan official, in the company of two other HR representatives, about his medical condition.

On January 22, in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, the 5 central labor federations in Rio called for Chip’s immediate reinstatement at a protest outside a Nissan dealership. Led by President of the UGT union, Ricardo Patah, auto workers and retail workers held signs that read “I am Chip Wells.”

Within hours, Nissan finally contacted Chip and asked him to return to work that evening.

**Labor Board Regional Director Finds Merit in Unfair Labor Practice Charges Against Nissan**

In April 2014, a Regional Director of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found merit in Chip’s unfair labor practice charges against Nissan. Rather than defend its actions in a trial before a judge, Nissan settled the allegations that Nissan retaliated against Wells and unlawfully prohibited distribution of union materials.

Nissan will be required to expunge the retaliatory counselings from Chip’s record.

The NLRB settlement does not require Nissan to compensate Wells for the months of lost pay he endured during a medical leave that was precipitated by the Company’s unlawful conduct.

**Mississippi clergy and community leaders demand Chip be made whole**

The Mississippi Alliance for Fairness at Nissan (MAFFAN) is demanding that Nissan grant Chip back pay for the medical leave of absence and issue him an apology for the humiliating photo.

“Chip Wells honorably served our country. To prey on his vulnerabilities as a veteran with PTSD symptoms by harassing him and portraying him as a thug simply because he is pro-union is abominable. We demand that Nissan issue him back-pay and an apology,” said Dr. Isiac Jackson, Chair MAFFAN.

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