

Court Rules CHAOS Legal

As the campaign at Alaska Airlines gained momentum, twenty-four Flight Attendants struck seven flights targeted by AFA-CWA, with no advance warning. The CHAOS strikers persisted despite threats, discipline and suspensions. Faced with management's threat to fire the next striker, AFA-CWA won an injunction in federal court, including an order to reinstate – with full back pay – those strikers who remained on suspension. The court upheld the Union's legal right to implement intermittent strikes citing protection under the Railway Labor Act. The CHAOS strategy had won protection under the law.

Two weeks after the court ruled, on the eve of another wave of CHAOS, Alaska Airlines management signed a new Contract with AFA-CWA. Under the agreement, Flight Attendants achieved top-of-the-industry pay; some received as much as a 60% pay increase. Major improvements were agreed to in work rules, duty and rest provisions, and the Union shop clause, abolished by management eight months earlier, was restored.

CHAOS Revisited

After CHAOS proved so successful at Alaska Airlines, AFA-CWA Flight Attendants have used this strategy at other airlines in their negotiations. At some, like America West, US Airways and AirTran, the threat of CHAOS was enough to help win a Contract settlement. At Midwest Express the Flight Attendants negotiated a strong first Contract just weeks after the end of the cooling-off period. CHAOS succeeded even before the first flight was struck.

CHAOS provokes strong reactions from airline executives. Some have taken extreme measures to counteract CHAOS: unbolting seats and removing them from every aircraft; announcing they would cancel the entire schedule rather than risk CHAOS strikes. Nothing they have tried has proven effective, and in the end all have reached agreement with AFA-CWA on new Contracts.

The Lessons of CHAOS

CHAOS works because it is creative, taking advantage of our strengths and management's weaknesses to maximize our impact and minimize our risk.

CHAOS works because it appeals directly to the passengers' self-interests. Traditional strikes and picket lines are often resented or ignored by the public. By contrast, passengers learn quickly from media coverage of CHAOS that their flight might not depart, or it might not get them home. That element of surprise forces them to alter their travel plans once CHAOS begins.

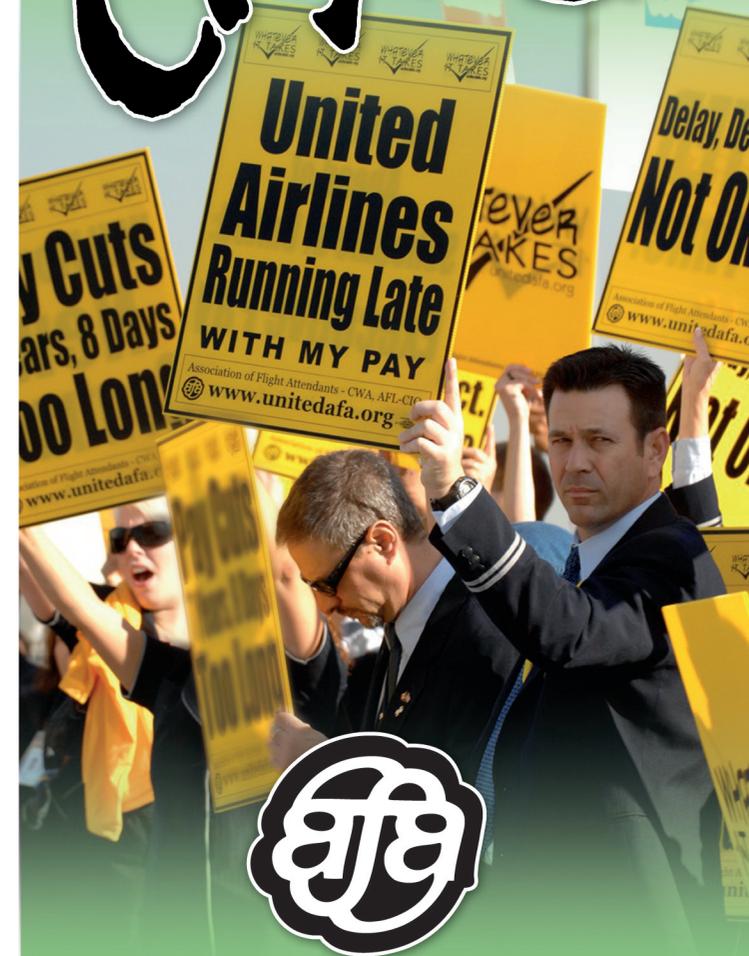
CHAOS works because of our solidarity and the support we receive from our Union and from our sisters and brothers throughout the labor movement.

CHAOS works because it can be adapted to any situation. Intermittent strikes are just one form of CHAOS. An all-out strike might work better in some situations. But CHAOS always brings an element of surprise that is not part of traditional strikes. That element of surprise makes it more powerful, and keeps management from developing an effective strategy to counter CHAOS. Our ultimate strategy at United is limited only by our creativity and our willingness to exercise our legal rights.

*For greater detail and more information we encourage all Members to view the CHAOS video available via OurContract.org

CHAOS

AFA-CWA CHAOS



**Association of
Flight Attendants-CWA**
AFL-CIO



Negotiations & You – Right to Strike with CHAOS™

An important part of our Contract Campaign is understanding our right to self help – our right to strike. Together we promise to act in unity to achieve the Contract that recognizes our contributions to the success of our airline. This promise includes being prepared to execute a legal strike should management fail to negotiate a Contract with us even as they face the strike deadline at the end of the 30-day cooling off period.

Strike Preparedness begins long before a strike deadline. Our strike preparations are well underway and we will continue our work throughout our Contract Campaign, both as a means to execute a successful strike should it become necessary and as means to demonstrate to management that we are not only willing, we are ready to act.

This flyer contains information about our strike strategy and our legal analysis prepared by AFA legal on our right to strike. Review the information and share it with your flying partners. We encourage you to also attend your Local Council Strike Education Meetings taking place around the system, or consider hosting a seminar at your house. Contact your Local Council for details.

AFA-CWA's CHAOS Strategy

CHAOS is AFA-CWA's trademarked strategy of intermittent strikes, other non-traditional work actions and it is an integral part of our

public Contract Campaign. As we gear up for a showdown with United over our Contract negotiations, CHAOS is an important weapon in our arsenal. The form CHAOS takes at United will be unique. Where an intermittent strike against a few flights might work best at one airline, an all-out strike for a day or a week might be the best tactic somewhere else. One of the most powerful aspects of the CHAOS strategy is our ability to adapt it to the specific facts of our campaign, to keep airline executives off balance with the element of surprise, and to take advantage of weakness in the company's strategy.

The First CHAOS Campaign

The first CHAOS campaign began when AFA-CWA Contract negotiations with Alaska Airlines broke down. Management positioned the company for a strike and, after the end of the 30-day cooling-off period, imposed drastic cuts in work rules, pay and pensions, and even a non-union shop. Nearly 500 office workers from the airline's headquarters were trained to take over Flight Attendants' jobs, and the company hired hundreds of strike-breakers ready to go to work as permanent replacements.

Alaska's 1500 Flight Attendants weighed effects of a traditional, all-out strike against such forceful

odds. Instead, they turned to an innovative strategy of intermittent strikes and other work actions that would Create Havoc Around Our System™, threatening to strike targeted flights anytime, anywhere and without notice. The message was straightforward: if you fly Alaska, expect CHAOS.

The CHAOS Message

Thanks to CHAOS picketing, rallies, onboard leafleting and nearly non-stop media coverage, passenger traffic fell dramatically before a single flight was struck. Management was forced to fly its replacement Flight Attendants on nearly every flight for nearly two months, anticipating random strikes by CHAOS strikers.

Thousands of labor activists from other unions supported the Flight Attendants. Some wore green CHAOS t-shirts and leafleted passengers during Alaska Airlines flights, others were arrested for civil disobedience for picketing and a sit-in outside company headquarters.

The media blitz generated by CHAOS has since become a hallmark of our most successful campaigns. CHAOS overcomes media stereotypes about strikes with nearly endless coverage of the creativity, and the element of surprise, central to every CHAOS campaign.

