

# IN EGYPT A DICTATOR CENSORS POLITICS; IN THE US A CORPORATION CENSORS ... FOOTBALL

To be fair, it was not a highly lucrative football **game** CBS censored. Rather, it was an ad put out by the players' union opposing the lockout the owners are threatening. I guess anything from a labor union – even a labor union representing a bunch of highly paid celebrities – may count as taboo politics to a big corporation.

Moreover, CBS and other football networks have basically agreed to pay the league billions whether or not a single game is played; the networks are basically paying the owners to break the union.

CBS is one of four networks that pay the NFL \$4 billion a year to televise the league's games. CBS, Fox, NBC and ESPN, as well as DirecTV, all agreed to pay the NFL in 2011 even if a lockout disrupts or cancels the season – a relationship that the NFLPA finds a little too cozy. In fact, the union filed suit against the league claiming the TV deals provide the owners with guaranteed payment even when no games are played, effectively purchasing "lockout insurance."

A ruling could come as soon as this week. Mr. Atallah said CBS's decision to pull the ad "is clearly indicative of the relationships the networks have with the league."

Either they're just so afraid of losing the contract or they're willing to forgo a season for two extra games pitting badly injured

players trying to stay in the game.

But whatever it is, it's censorship. And at a time when our government is lecturing dictators in other countries about censorship, you'd think they'd be a bit bothered by corporations using our own public airwaves.

*For more on this labor fight, see Lockout Central.*