



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 8, 2020

CNN Settles \$275 Million Defamation Lawsuit Brought by Covington Student

Fox19 out of Newport, Kentucky, was the  first to announce [the out of court settlement](#) of a \$275 million defamation lawsuit brought against CNN by Nicholas Sandmann, a student at Covington Catholic High School (CovCath).

The lawsuit stemmed from an incident that CNN transformed into a transmission belt for its anti-Trump hatred. Following the incident last January at the Lincoln Memorial, CNN declared that Sandmann, then a junior at CovCath, was a racist. The network repeated the canard that Sandmann had confronted a Native American while wearing a MAGA (Make America Great Again) baseball cap, thus proving that Trump is a racist along with his followers.

Two videos released in the days following the event ([here](#) and [here](#)) showed no such thing, but by that time it was too late. For seven days, CNN, along with the *Washington Post* and NBC, promoted the lie. In fact, that additional footage showed that it was a hate group called the Black Hebrew Israelites that initially provoked the confrontation by hurling racial slurs and epithets at the students as they were waiting for their bus following a March for Life event. Nathan Phillips, part of a separate event taking place nearby, the Indigenous Peoples March, saw his opportunity and confronted the students.

Sandmann's lead attorney, L. Lin Wood, said that "CNN was probably more vicious in its direct attack on Nicholas than the *Washington Post*. And CNN goes into millions of homes. They really went after Nicholas with the idea that he was part of a mob that was attacking the Black Hebrew Israelites, yelling racist slurs at the Black Hebrew Israelites. Totally false."

The [15-minute YouTube video Wood created](#) has been viewed more than two million times. In its lede into the video he published last February, he wrote, "Two weeks ago, the mainstream media, politicians, church officials, commentators, and celebrities rushed to judgment to wrongfully condemn, threaten, disparage and vilify Nick Sandmann based solely on a few seconds of an out-of-context video clip. It only takes 15 minutes to learn the truth. Here it is."

Added Wood: "If you took the time to look at the full context of what happened that day, Nicholas Sandmann did absolutely nothing wrong. He was, as I've said to others, the only adult in the room. But you have a situation where CNN couldn't resist the idea that here's a guy with a young boy, that Make America Great Again cap on. So they go after him."

And for that "rushing to judgment," CNN is paying a steep price. Although the amount of the settlement of the \$275 million lawsuit remains undisclosed, CNN's reputation as a reliable reporter of the news has been further besmirched.

Wood held nothing back in his filing of Sandman's lawsuit against CNN:

Between January 19 and January 25, 2019, CNN brought down the full force of its corporate power, influence, and wealth on Nicholas by falsely attacking, vilifying, and bullying him despite the fact that he was a minor child....

CNN's vicious attack on Nicholas included at least four (4) defamatory television broadcasts and



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nine (9) defamatory online articles falsely accusing Nicholas and his Covington Catholic High School ("CovCath") classmates of, among other things, engaging in racist conduct by instigating a threatening confrontation with several African American men ("the Black Hebrew Israelites") and subsequently instigating a threatening confrontation with Native Americans who were in the midst of prayer following the Indigenous Peoples March at the National Mall.

More specifically, CNN falsely asserted that Nicholas and his CovCath classmates were in a "racis[t]" "mob mentality" and "looked like they were going to lynch" the Black Hebrew Israelites who were merely "preaching about the Bible nearby" "because they didn't like the color of their skin" and "their religious views," and that Nicholas and his classmates then "surrounded" one of the Native Americans, 64-year old Nathan Phillips, creating "a really dangerous situation" during which Nicholas "blocked [Phillips'] escape" when Phillips tried "to leave" the mob, causing Phillips to "fear for his safety and the safety of those with him," while Nicholas and his classmates "harassed and taunted" him....

The CNN accusations are totally and unequivocally false and CNN would have known them to be untrue had it undertaken any reasonable efforts to verify their accuracy before publication of its false and defamatory accusations....

CNN elevated false, heinous accusations of racist conduct against Nicholas from social media to its worldwide news platform without adhering to well-established journalistic standards and ethics, including its failure to take the required steps to ensure accuracy, fairness, completeness, fact-checking, neutrality, and heightened sensitivity when dealing with a minor....

In order to fully compensate Nicholas for the reputational harm, emotional distress, and mental anguish caused by CNN's false attacks, this action seeks compensatory damages in excess of Seventy-Five Million Dollars (\$75,000,000.00).

That number was subsequently raised to \$275 million to teach CNN a lesson. It's likely that CNN saw that it would cost them less to settle out of court, both financially and credibility-wise. A full-blown jury trial would have further devastated whatever shreds of credibility CNN might still retain. In any event, CNN continues to pay dearly for letting its hatred of anything Trump further sully its reputation as a credible member of the Fourth Estate.

The CNN settlement also serves as a warning to *Washington Post* and NBC that Sandmann's lawsuits against them might cost them just as dearly.

Trial dates for those lawsuits haven't been scheduled yet.

Image: screenshot from [YouTube video](#)

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