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**M**emo to CNBC employees thinking about jumping ship to the Fox Business Network, set to kick off October 15: Get your Kevins straight!

That advice comes a little too late for Eric Bolling. In June, Mr. Bolling, a high-rolling commodities trader-turned-charismatic CNBC talking head, informed his cable news bosses that he was quitting as a commentator on the market-analysis show *Fast Money*.

Publicly, Mr. Bolling has since suggested that he wanted to spend more time with his family (don't they all?). But CNBC executives suspected otherwise, thanks in part to an e-mail in which Mr. Bolling's lawyer chewed over the enforceability of a non-compete clause in the pundit's contract. Mr. Bolling, according to court documents, had intended to forward the message to Kevin Magee, a senior executive at the Fox Business Network, but instead directed it to CNBC honcho Kevin Goldman.

In July, Mr. Bolling and his lawyers sent CNBC a letter arguing that he should be released from his contract, freeing him to sign on with a competitor. In an affidavit, the multimillionaire argued that CNBC never treated him as an irreplaceable asset: "I was

not highly compensated, was not provided with a wardrobe, and received no benefits or even a car service."

CNBC, unsurprisingly, saw things differently. Billable hours ensued.

"Eric Bolling signed a contract,"

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**'CBS was straightforward. They answered our questions. They dealt with us. That was not the reaction we got at NBC from Capus.'**

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CNBC's Goldman told NYTV. "And we expect him to abide by his contractual obligations."

You can't blame CNBC for taking a hard line. In recent months, rumors have swirled around the cable news world about efforts by News Corp. execs to poach CNBC talent. Still,

Mr. Bolling's attorney, Steven Mintz, told us he was amazed at the lengths CNBC was going to try to keep "a talking yak-yak" from continuing his television career elsewhere. "We think they are using nuclear weapons when maybe a small hand grenade would be appropriate," said Mr. Mintz. (Of course, the media high road is littered with the roadkill of news organizations that thought they could defend themselves against Rupert Murdoch using small-caliber weapons.)

As for Fox, it's not exactly hiding its intentions. Last month, a top executive filed an affidavit with the court stating, "If Mr. Bolling were free to work for the Fox Business Network, we would be very interested in hiring him."