



COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA LOCAL 9421 - AFL-CIO, CLC

2725 EL CAMINO AVENUE, SACRAMENTO CA 95821

(916) 484-9421 * FAX (916) 484-1052 * WWW.CWALOCAL9421.ORG

The Honorable Julius Genachowski

Federal Communications Commission

445 Twelfth St. S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20054

RE: In the Matter of Review of Applications of Comcast Corporation, General Electric Company, and NBC Universal, Inc., to Assign and transfer Control of FCC Licenses, MB Docket No. 10-56

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The purpose of this letter is to share the experiences of CWA Local 9421 with Comcast in the Sacramento and surrounding vicinity. While our experiences have been anything but pleasant, the even more unfortunate matter is that this pattern of mistreatment and abuses touches nearly every local where Comcast operates across the nation. As the Organizer of our Local for many years, I have heard the previous war stories and witnessed the anti-union tactics of Comcast first hand. The best way to describe Comcast is they are the cute little dog with the fancy collar that as soon as you turn your back, bites you until you bleed, because they can't be trusted.

Our Local's history with Comcast goes back over 20 years ago, when a small cable outfit began in the Sacramento area by the name of Sacramento Cable. In the 1980's cable television was the newest and hottest craze of that time period. Building the infrastructure and new activations kept the workers very busy and it wasn't long before some workers were talking to representatives from CWA in our area about forming a union. These early attempts to organize were unsuccessful due to threats of termination for anyone who discussed the union.

Eventually, Sacramento Cable was sold to Comcast. Comcast's primary goal from the beginning appeared to be doing everything in their power to keep the workers from becoming union. Some of the workers that contacted us back when it was Sacramento Cable, continued to keep in touch with us and several attempts to organize Comcast in the Sacramento area took place between the late 1980's to late 19s90's. Some attempts never even made it to elections due to the anti-union tactics of Comcast. Mandatory captive audience meetings on company time bashing unions of being dues hungry fat-cats; one-on-one investigatory meetings with various levels of management; disciplinary action taken for things that normally wouldn't be considered an infraction for those believed to be in touch with the union like being written up and/or suspended for having a dirty truck; threats that terminations would occur for those who chose to become part of any union; and more occurred to squash any interest in becoming part of CWA. For the few times that petitions were successfully filed for an election, Comcast was known for buying their way out of the matter by handing out or promising promotions, transfers, raises, etc. in addition to more of the same activities mentioned from previous

attempts only taken up several notches as far as the spotlight that searched out the union instigators. In more than one instance a well timed termination of known union supporter also aided in placing enough fear into the workers to keep the union from being voted in.

In the late 1990's Comcast sold their Sacramento and surrounding area cable network to AT&T Broadband. While the name of the company changed, most of the managers and employees were from the former Comcast. AT&T had over 60 years of bargaining experience with the Communications Workers of America with contracts in place for many of their workers during this time period. One of the provisions of the contract in place was for a Neutrality and Consent Election Agreement for the unorganized workers of AT&T and its subsidiaries. Believe it or not there was still one or two people still in contact with us who somehow survived all of the many years of threats, intimidation, and unjust terminations, who still wanted to become part of our union. This was my first dealing with the workers formerly of Comcast, and there was more interest than before in becoming union. We worked for several months to ensure that we had a solid majority of support before petitioning AT&T Broadband for an election with the American Arbitration Association. The anti-union former Comcast managers violated the neutrality agreement several times during the period leading up to the election – but admittedly, it did keep them from their previous all out assaults on the workers. We won the election by a 2 to 1 margin and the results were certified. For the first time in well over a decade of multiple attempts to organize the cable workers in the Sacramento area – we were finally successful thanks to an agreement between CWA and AT&T Broadband.

A short time after we successfully organized the cable workers of AT&T Broadband and began the collective bargaining process for a first contract, the cable network in our area owned by AT&T Broadband was purchased back by Comcast. Bargaining was moving along at a snail's pace which is par for the course with most employers who wish to stall bargaining out for a year and push for a decertification election. Comcast was no exception to the rule. They made bargaining impossible during the remainder of the first year leading up to the filing of a decertification petition by several of the company minded workers. During the time leading up to the election, the company harped on the fact that CWA was unsuccessful in helping the workers in any way during the year they were part of the union. Management worked to resolve some of the key complaints, and the mantra for Comcast was, "AT&T Broadband is gone, Comcast is back, and all we want is for you all to give us a chance to make things better." Never mind the fact that the management at many of the levels were the same people that had been there for the earlier Comcast years as well as the AT&T Broadband years. Every attempt was made to put a band aid fix on everything possible, and promise further fixes when they were free from being forced to bargain with CWA. Many Unfair Labor Practices were committed by Comcast in their desperate attempts to eradicate the union, but with the level of fear many had for their jobs – few were willing to come forward and testify against their known anti-union employer.... So they got away with everything short of murder. They flew in out-of-state Executives and rented out the entire Arco Arena for a breakfast that turned into an anti-union bashing mandatory captive audience session that lasted for several hours. Daily, the managers stroked and rewarded the vocal anti-union folks while they slighted and abused anyone believed to be in favor of keeping the union. By the time the election rolled around the workers were made a truck load of promises contingent on voting the union out – which the majority of workers did.

Shortly after successfully decertifying CWA, Comcast went to work on their list of promises. The first thing they did was look for creative ways to terminate several of the loyal, vocal pro-union workers (one being terminated for using profanity which had been an everyday occurrence in the cable environment since the inception thereof). One of the more respected pro-union workers who seemed to have an agenda by the end that wasn't in line with the union was promoted to management. Workers on the payroll during the unionized period of Comcast fell one-by-one to dismissal or gave up and quit from the shameless abuses of Comcast. Any raises that were handed out as promised were quickly negated by the fact that the employee was let go or quit. Comcast brought in more and more contractors to perform

installation work, to avoid having to worry about any rebound unionizing attempts. The vast majority of their promises went unfulfilled, and with little to no-one left to even know what was promised, Comcast was able to continue on with a complete lack of conscience.

Of course, in order to purge their more experienced work force – the quality of service by Comcast plummeted. With loose hiring practices by the contract company's working for Comcast, in one case a registered sex offender was entering customer's homes to perform installation work for Comcast in Sacramento, and this story was plastered all over the newspapers. In response, CWA sponsored legislation in California to require mandatory background checks for contractors of any major company in the telecommunications industry to ensure that the likes of Comcast (who was not known for following through on their commitments) discontinued the practice of hiring violent criminals to perform their customer facing work.

When Comcast opened a large call center in Natomas, it wasn't long before we began to receive calls from workers interested in becoming part of CWA. We performed several leafleting out in front of the center, and held a couple of small intimate meetings with workers. Comcast management began to make comments that if the union was voted in, that Comcast would be forced to close this new office. Fearful for their jobs, the contact with most of these workers came to an abrupt stop.

The bottom line is that Comcast has VERY deep pockets, no conscience, and is willing to do whatever it takes to get their way – including violating the law if necessary. I have heard Comcast promise the moon and stars to good workers who merely wanted to work collectively to improve their working conditions, pay and benefits. Those that trusted Comcast were greatly disappointed when they found themselves standing in the line at EDD to file for unemployment.

I'm certain Comcast will do whatever is necessary to ensure the successful merger with NBCU which will make them even more influential, powerful and dangerous... especially in their quest to destroy decent union jobs in the telecommunications industry, by peddling their low priced, low quality bundles. Don't be fooled by the lies and deception of Comcast... for as soon as you turn your back, you will be left bloody and wondering what happened.

In Unity,

John D. Adams Jr.

**Vice President & Organizer
CWA Local 9421**