



CAPE BRIDGEWATER Holiday Camp

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Mr. Frank Blount,
Executive Officer
Telstra.

29th November, 1994

Dear Mr. Blount,

For six and a half years, I have been in conflict with Telecom management.

On Monday, 28th November, 1994, I viewed "The 7.30 Report" on the A.B.C. television network, where Mr. Graham Schorer, spokesperson for C.O.T., was being interviewed. I was amazed to see how much he has aged over the short span of 2½ years of which I have had the pleasure of knowing him. It appears to me that the four original members of C.O.T. are still fighting, against overwhelming odds, the giant Telecom Corporate animal.

We have been treated as criminals. Four small business people, from four completely different walks of life, spanning two States of Australia. Does the Board of Telstra really believe that such a group, with diverse interests and separated by such great distances, could possibly concoct such similar stories, if those stories were not absolutely true? Those people were bound together by one common bond — an enormous battle to try and make Telecom understand and accept the fact that their businesses were plagued by constant and never-ending telephone faults.

Not only did the four of us have similar complaints against Telecom, but we all received the same high-handed treatment when we lodged those complaints. We were belittled, derided and lied to by Telecom management — both individually and collectively. It became evident, as we discussed our problems, that we were the victims of misleading and deceptive Corporate conduct, from the hands of a few Telecom employees.

In two days, Mr. Blount, Telstra is to produce its defence against my Submission, in accordance with the Fast Track Arbitration Procedure.

Twelve months ago I signed an agreement with you, Mr. Blount. You broke that agreement. Nothing has changed. Telecom is still lying to C.O.T. and its members. Again I ask, does the Board of Telstra really believe that we (C.O.T.) are all willing to risk our integrity by fabricating a story to suit our own ends?

I, along with other C.O.T. members, have evidence that Telecom employees lied about certain incidents. They fabricated stories which were intended to deceive and mislead; the reasons for which are known only to themselves.

Never at any time during my discussions with Telecom management, did they show any interest in hearing what I had to say about these fabricated stories. Stories told by the very people who were responsible for relaying messages back to that same management. Thus I was told that no communication faults were known on my service.

C.O.T. was born out of the frustration of its members when confronted with bad management, as practised by a few senior Telecom employees. Nothing else.

I know of a young Telecom employee who refused a senior position within Telecom — the inner sanctum. The reason for that refusal, was that he believed he lacked management skills.

I may be wrong, Mr. Blount; I may be well off target. But just maybe, therein lies your problem. This man knew his capabilities. Surely he could have received additional training. How many technical people have Telecom trained in customer relations?

One has only to review the case of Mr. Steve. Black, Customer Response Unit, to understand where Telecom has gone wrong. In the Senate Estimates he was described as a man with a point of view, different to the truth.

Look at his response when questioned about the "bugging" of a Ballarat man. This is just another example of the misleading and deceptive behaviour practised by certain members of Telecom Management. They find it easier to lie than seek out a solution to the problem.

I spent some time with Mr. Ralph Bova when he and his family came to my Camp for a holiday. They had no money. The holiday was a gesture, on my part, to help someone in need. Nothing more. Ralph Bova, in case you are not aware, used to be a very good Pizza cook — a man proud of his heritage.

One day, in conversation, he tearfully told me his story. True, he may have been stressed out, but he was certainly not a liar. His story triggered an awareness in me — that like Mr. Bova and Ms. Anne Garms, my telephone, too, had been "bugged" by Telecom.

Mr. Bova is a broken man today. He has been clinically certified as "mentally unstable." His accusations against Telecom — his constant story that Telecom had "bugged" his phones, has now been proved to be correct. One wonders whether the effect of what Telecom allowed to happen, will ever be erased from that man's mind?

In preparing the submission for my claim against Telecom, I spoke with two Clinical Psychologists. I produced my diaries, which recorded the saga of Telecom/C.O.T. events; and which caused me some embarrassment as I was reminded of incidents which triggered so much anger, goading me to write as I did. Yet I tabled these documents, holding nothing back, despite my embarrassment.

I met with Kaye Frankcom, a Psychologist, here in Portland, in her professional rooms. She treated me like a human being and I felt like one. Likewise, I was interviewed by Mr. Christopher Mackey, in his rooms. Again I was treated humanely and not belittled.

I submitted the report from Christopher Mackey, and though I did not entirely agree with his findings, I presented his notes; as I had nothing, either then or now, to hide.

Of all the things that have occurred to me during my life, through my years in the Merchant Navy right up to this present confrontation, nothing compares with my experience at the hands of Telstra and Clinical Psychologist, Ian Joblin.

Mr. Rumble, Customer Response Unit, Telecom, arranged for me to meet with Ian Joblin, who, supposedly, had no previous association with either Telecom or Mr. Rumble. I hope this is the case.

The newly-appointed (?) Telecom Psychologist chose, as the venue for my appointment, the Public Bar of the Richmond Henty Hotel. Not being a regular hotel patron, I felt ill at ease from the very outset. For five hours, Mr. Blount, I was handed hundreds of small cards, which I had to place in three different piles. Never, in all my life, did I believe that I would be subjected to Psychological Analysis in a public place, i.e.: a Hotel Bar.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Blount, that you take a good long, hard look into Telecom. Why, I keep wondering, did your staff lie? Certainly you eavesdropped on my calls . . . you placed my home under surveillance; but what, in the long-run, did it all achieve?

From the very beginning the whole thing has been a bloody disgrace . . . a bloody Australian disgrace . . . and still the lies continue. Telecom are still denying C.O.T. members the right to view F.O.I. documents. What are they frightened of now?

What else can I say, but, "Meet me in the Richmond Henry."



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