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Honorable Cambridge City Council
795 Mass Avenue
Cambridge MA 02139

January 9, 2003

Cambridge Community Television

It appears that my letter to the Council dated December 10, 2002 about unlawful abuses at CCTV was ignored. That may explain why the abuses continue. I do not know if the failure of that letter being included in the regular agenda--the usual practice of letters to the Council--had any effect.

Nonetheless the problem remains to be the Executive Director of CCTV, Susan Fleischman. Fleischman did a meritorious job of running CCTV for many years. Her efforts were recognized by many former and current employees and members, and other persons. Indeed it may be that her successes caused her recent decline from the standard she exercised over the many years of development of CCTV.

One indicative problem suggesting scrutiny is the high level of turnover of staff and members. Each month a large number of persons join CCTV. They participate in the numerous classes in video production and editing; and computer usage. But after a few weeks a very high percentage of them disappear and do not complete any further training.

Another is the primary focus on the need and interests of a select few favored persons at CCTV. Some are not residents of Cambridge. Most are staff members but some are interns and ordinary members. Some are friends of the Executive Director. The staff recruits crew for shoots in the main studio, but only for select producers. This group usually shares the Executive Director's views on politics, race, sexism and gay rights. These are the three groups which are prioritized by the staff of CCTV and the political leadership of City of Cambridge. This myopic vision of vulnerable persons in need of protections from abuse and discrimination led to the difficulties I experience at CCTV.

The Executive Director is proud of the designation of CCTV as the number one community access station in the country for the second time. But the standards for this award are not known. The large number of new members each month do not remain active in the station's activities. There are a large number of video and

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computer courses and free hours for the non members to use the station's computers.

Few persons go beyond the basic courses then disappear. But the numbers look good on paper. The Board of Directors and staff have a curious habit of giving awards to employees of foundations that give them grants.

This applies also to the Board of Directors some of whom have no interest in or experience with video production or broadcast television. It is a good resume filler. Due to their lack of interest and experience they regularly defer to Fleischman. They are in fact a rubber stamp board. Several have told me this directly.

Some have expressed their view that Fleischman is an "invaluable member" of the station. What Cambridge state official granted himself the same designation? I read about a large and growing group of indispensable persons who continue to fill the cemeteries while the world goes on.

Fleischman is a well-connected player on the local political scene. She regularly recruits crew for shoots for favored pols, politically active non profits, and the well endowed educational multi-national corporations in Cambridge. The CCTV staff use grant money to promote the views of Harvard, MIT and City officials; all of whose voices can be heard in the mainstream media.

The selective approach to civil liberties allowed many years of indignities and abuses due to insulting speech based upon perceived disability by the staff, members and their friends, and the Board of Directors. Though I asked in 2000 that disability rights be included in the theme months, the Executive Director was unable to obtain any videos on disabled persons up to and including this date. She told me that there are no available videos on the subject.

She has many strong supporters among the black, gay and feminist communities. But the Executive Director, the staff and the Board of Directors ignore discrimination due to age and/or disability.

This resulted in the severe disrespect toward me by the Executive Director; her insulting and provocative behavior on December 10, 2002. After numerous complaints to the staff and to the Executive Director about hostility and insults from an intern, the abuses escalated with the Executive Director insulting me for complaining about being insulted.

Her screaming at me to "shut up" for five minutes, was unprofessional. It was one more expression of unlawful bias. And it was a violation of the station's rules; state, city and US discrimination statutes.

On Tuesday January 7, 2003, I arrived at the CCTV studios at about 4:15 PM for my live show scheduled for 4:30 PM. Eli Kao, Programming Coordinator was in the BeLive studio with Jamal Wiley,

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an experienced cablecast intern for my show. I do not know what they were discussing.

I asked Jamal if he would get me a microphone as I was directed to do on December 10, 2002. Until that time I would ask each week for the microphone myself. The person on duty at the desk would get one from the equipment room. But during recent weeks the person at the desk did not have a key. That is what precipitated the insults by the Executive Director on December 10, 2002.

Kao explained in a hostile tone that it was not the duty of the cablecaster to get microphones. I said that I was told to ask them in December.

After some discussion, Artman Martin arrived in the studio with a microphone. He performed audio level checks for the roll-in tapes, the CD player and the microphone. Nonetheless only the audio levels for the roll-in tapes was satisfactory when I reviewed the show later that day. The audio levels for the CD player and the microphone were overmodulated.

The usual practice for BeLive shows is for them to be rebroadcast the next morning and the following midnight in a taped replay. One of the ways in which the staff censored my shows which they disapproved of, was to "forget" to replay the tape with my show on it. I noticed this happened on a regular basis when I criticized the police or the staff of the station.

This happened again on Wednesday January 8, 2003. My show was not rebroadcast in the morning as scheduled at 9:00 AM, nor at midnight; but the rest of the shows that day were. I have no evidence that this was done intentionally. But it is only the latest instance of this pattern of censorship. It happened many times over the years. My complaints as usual were ignored.

It showed me that the staff was arrogant and arbitrary in the way they applied their own rules, and the laws of the US. It is why they only focus on some forms of unlawful bias; and openly abuse and harass others, whom they dislike for personal or political reasons.

Fleischman and the staff are vigorous supporters of the Cambridge police and law enforcement; whether or not police abuse their power. They oppose and censor criticism of police and FBI abuses. The most recent instance was on Tuesday January 7, 2003.

This was after my letter to the City Council dated and filed December 11, 2002 complaining of the disrespect on December 10, 2002 just before I went on the air. It is another violation--retaliation; a separate offense. It is one more First Amendment violation.

This raises another issue of violations of the state ethics laws. The use of public funds for personal and political purposes is a violation of those laws. It is a form of theft of public funds. The Executive Director acts as if this is her right--to appropriate the station's facilities for her own personal and political causes. This is demonstrated in several ways.

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I complained about poor audio levels for my show for three years! I did one show with no sound at all. Instead of teaching the cablecasters how to improve the quality of sound, the staff attacked me for annoying the staff. The Executive Director said to me, "You're a pain in the ass."

It was not just my show which had poor audio levels. Taped shows in the main studio and other shows on the air could not be heard. I called to the station numerous times to alert the staff to poor sound being broadcast. Once again I was told that I was "a pain in the ass." Good audio is not a priority at CCTV.

I am not the first person to be harassed by the staff in response to complaints about favoritism, and poor technical quality. Martin Connors had similar experiences at the station and left after many similar abuses of false accusations and insults. This is the institutionalized pattern of a clique operating a public accommodation.

In the name of diversity and inclusion; in the name of fighting racism, sexism and homophobia, the staff implements a policy of abusing older citizen members and citizens with disabilities. This is intolerable and it is unlawful.

It shocks the senses but it is condoned by the City Council and the City Manager who refuse to reprimand the Executive Director who leads this form of abuse of police power. The failure of the City to act, encourages this unlawful behavior by the staff and others who saw it happen; they learn to conform, not to the law, but instead to the personal desires of the Executive Director.

Lord Acton taught us that power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely. Of course his observation applied to humans. But I have not heard any allegations that the Executive Director is not human. If she were, Acton's rule would not apply.

The priorities of the Executive Director have slipped to the superficial level of winning awards, and catering to favored associates, over broadcasting quality community television.

The low priority of facilities maintenance was a long term problem until very recently. One MediaOne technician told me he refused to service CCTV because of the chaotic condition of their broadcast cables. He called them "spaghetti."

I complained for one year about CCTV using an incorrect time for broadcast, one minute off of correct time. After many complaints the Executive Director found a way to obtain the correct time for broadcast, after I alerted her to the US Commerce Department providing the correct time. My complaints about the wrong time noted by the CCTV voice mail system remains--currently one day late and one hour early.

In spite of her recent missteps, Fleischman still enjoys the respect of many local citizens who she has serviced over the years. She is, in this respect no different than Bernard Cardinal Law, and William and James Bulger, who also helped a lot of people along the way. But that does not excuse her unlawful policies and practices

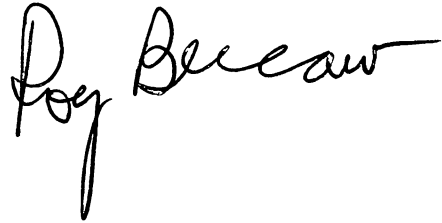
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at CCTV and her attacks on me because of my complaints about this illegal activity.

Just as the abuses in the Church and the FBI in Boston were protected by the politicians and the police, so too are current psychiatric abuses. This is another area of intolerable behavior by the Executive Director who allowed the facilities of the station to be used for psychological testing and conditioning. First by Harvard and now by MIT students and politically motivated behaviorist professionals. This is one more abuse of the police power of the staff.

The failure of the Board of Directors to exercise any oversight allows the Executive Director to implement whatever goals she desires, even those contrary to law. This must be addressed by the City which provides the major funding for CCTV, which is a public accommodation. CCTV cannot selectively enforce whatever laws the Executive Director feels are compatible with her view of the world. That is an unlawful abuse.

Finally and most offensive of all, police associates of the Executive Director appear at my building to harass me at my home. This is another abuse of power which the City encourages by failing to stop it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roy Bercaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

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Consent Communication #5

A communication was
received from Roy Bercaw,
regarding Cambridge
Community Television.

In City Council January 13, 2003

PLACED ON FILE.