

# Pending Comcast deal muzzles NBC with reporters

January 13 2011, By DAVID BAUDER , AP Television Writer

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(AP) -- Who will replace Steve Carell on "The Office" and can the comedy stay afloat without its star? What does the departure of Skeet Ulrich mean for "Law & Order: Los Angeles"? Can NBC take advantage of its phenomenal football ratings to develop some new hits?

Due to NBC Universal's still-pending purchase by [Comcast](#), such questions were left hanging on Thursday.

Caught in the middle, NBC chose not to make an executive available to talk about the network's programming during a twice-annual meeting with the Television Critics Association, a group of reporters from all over the country that cover the industry.

Federal regulators still haven't approved the Comcast-NBC Universal merger, so Bob Greenblatt, who's been designated the new NBC entertainment chairman, isn't officially on the job yet.

He's replacing Jeff Gaspin, who will not be staying with the company.

Even with the awkward executive muddle, NBC is still on the air and its viewers are curious what will be happening with their shows, said Susan Young, a San Francisco-based writer and president of the TCA.

"It's not good for them at this time," Young said. "It seems like a rudderless ship."

Young said the TCA tried to convince NBC to make an executive available, suggesting Angela Bromstad, primetime entertainment chairman, would have been a good choice. Young's organization is wary of setting a precedent where a major broadcast network doesn't make its executives available to reporters from outlets across the country.

Instead, NBC brought forth actors and producers from shows like "The Cape," "Community" and "Harry's Law."

"In light of where we are in our transition, we didn't think it would be appropriate to have an executive session," NBC entertainment spokeswoman Rebecca Marks said.

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