

ITV

Dear all:

My thanks to everyone who has decided to share your thoughts about the possible WGA representation. I really appreciate hearing your views, both against and in support of the WGA, because I know they come from your hearts. I know that this is a difficult decision for many of you, especially those who are on the fence, and I want to share my experience from the last couple of weeks in the hopes that it will somehow figure into your choice next Tuesday.

Over the years I've worked at many production companies where people are treated like a mere cog in the machine, where crappy working conditions fueled by greed, mismanagement, bureaucracy, and dysfunction was the norm. I was once fired from a show that I was editing without any notice, not because I did anything wrong but the owner simply didn't feel like dipping into his profit (and who then put his wife to the task of finishing the show!). The visceral sense of injustice I felt still stings.

Then I started working at ITV in 2002 (when it was known as Granada America) and saw how different things can be.

Simply put, it was the best company I've ever worked in, a place where everyone is respected and treated fairly, where good work gets done without abuse, without rancor. And when I began working as an EP and showrunner, one of my overriding goals was to help keep it that way. I hope that you will agree that we are one company where--no matter how bad the day looks, how much crap the networks throw at us, how imposing the production headaches are--everyone looks forward to going to work every day because, at the end of the day, it's an rewarding experience.

The last couple of weeks have been revelatory...in several ways.

When I first learned that we will be holding a WGA election along with several other production companies with terrible reputations, I was floored. I always believed that as a supervisor how you treat people meant something, that it made a difference in how you in turn are viewed and valued. Yet our presence in the company of these other unsavory production outfits seems to say otherwise, that it doesn't make much difference in the larger context of the way our industry is structured and staffed.

And with all the closed door meetings, uncomfortable chats, whispered conversations, and certain realizations that demand to see your coworkers in a new unfamiliar light, I feel as though someone has drained from us the feeling of personal trust and mutual respect, as well as sense of common mission, that bound us all and make this a special place to work. They have been replaced by tension, fear and mistrust--fear of speaking your mind, mistrust of your coworkers and supervisors. Some of you (as well as several people who are not a part of this election) were kind enough to let me know I wasn't so alone in feeling this way, that a faint shadow of doubt and suspicion has fallen upon all of us.

And that is utterly depressing. Last Friday, I finally turned to Mike and Ted and admitted to them what I was trying to hold back--that I absolutely did not want to come to work. And I get nauseous when I

consider what may await us past next Tuesday—the months of negotiation ahead that will further poison the air.

I can now see what I didn't before--the fragility of what we had. And I can envision how much worse it might still get.

By the same token, I realized something else. Anything so fragile clearly should have received more care.

To me, this is the sole positive takeaway from the current situation: I, along with other supervisors, can do better. We can make ITV even a better place to work than before. We can strive to further separate ourselves from the rest of the industry. And we need to do it together.

I hope that you will give me, your colleagues and yourselves a chance to do that by voting NO next Tuesday.

Finally, whatever your thoughts on the issue, please do vote. This is your election that will decide the future of your company. Trust your own beliefs and feelings, and don't allow yourself to be bullied by either side!

I wish everyone a great Thanksgiving.

John X. Kim

-----Original Message-----

From: Andrews, Patrice <[REDACTED]>
To: Andrews, Patrice <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Fri, Nov 12, 2010 5:07 pm
Subject: WGA

Dear All:

As many of you know, the WGA East has filed a petition seeking to represent our Producers, Field Producers, Associate Producers, Post Producers and Story Producers. They have also filed petitions at Atlas Media, True Entertainment, Optomen, Lion Television and Sharp Entertainment. Very recently, the WGA withdrew its petition at True Entertainment so it will not represent production employees at True.

Our election is scheduled for November 30, 2010. Ballots may be cast here in the office or by mail – mail ballots will be provided for eligible voters who are working on location.

As with any election, there are two sides competing for your vote. And also like with all elections, it becomes a he said/she said campaign. We know that WGA has provided you with a lot of information along with a lot of promises. Now, we would like the opportunity to discuss the issues at hand and answer any questions you might have as well as provide perspective on the situation from our point of view. We understand what's at stake for our business and we'd like you to understand how a vote for the union will affect us all.

We know that many of you may be interested in the union for their 'free' health care plan. In life, as we all know, nothing is 'free'. In order to be eligible for their health coverage, you must pay an initiation fee of \$1500 (which if I had to guess, they're saying they will waive, but that is not guaranteed) along with dues calculated at 1.5% of your gross wages plus \$25 per quarter. But the other eligibility requirements, as outlined on their website, are that you must earn over \$33,000 from a Guild employer and then, once earned, there is a 3-month waiting period before you are actually enrolled. It's not an automatic enrollment just because you voted yes for the union or just because you're a union member.

One aspect to consider is how being a union member will affect your job opportunities. The WGA website says the following: "WGAE members can only work for companies that are signatory to Guild contracts. If you would like to work for an employer who is not a signatory, call the Guild and we'll help you strategize to make that happen. Contact the Organizing Department at 212-767-7808."

The organizing department? Beyond the implication that the WGA will want to organize every non-union place you may want to work, it also means that you basically have to ask permission to get another job at a non-union company. The WGA may say that it's just a simple phone call. But that phone call means control over what next job you take and where you are employed. Unlike IATSE, the WGA takes a much more aggressive stance on how to manage their members. By having the union between us it means you won't be able to make decisions about your own career unless you have the union's blessing.

Recently, the WGA tried to organize non-fiction/reality companies on the west coast and failed – for a reason. The voting members of those west-coast companies realized that the WGA didn't have their interests at heart and concluded that the WGA would drive a wedge between them and the television networks. This is very much what they'd like to do here and we believe very strongly that the WGA doesn't have your best interests in mind.

One other thing to consider – the WGA claims that, once the production companies are unionized, they will lobby the cable networks we work with to provide us with more money to cover the costs of your benefits. After having spent over 20 years on the cable side of the business and now on the production company side of the business, I can tell you that the cable networks don't have to provide more money because there is no shortage of television production companies here in New York – and in countless other cities – who will be willing to produce shows under the terms – and budgets – required by the cable networks.

Lastly, the WGA could affect our current slate of shows because we don't own the rights to many of the shows we currently have in production. If the cable networks decide they don't want to work with us, they can simply

take our shows to another producer. And, unfortunately, there is nothing we could do about it. As much as they may like us as a production group, we don't believe the cable networks will change the way they do business.

We believe we have earned a reputation as a positive place to work where the employees come first. We have a strong reputation in the production community for providing employees with growth opportunities on some of cable's best and brightest programs. Many of our employees have been here for many years working up through the ranks. And we'd like to continue to do business with you as we have all these years.

I ask that you take a moment to talk with your manager and with me about these issues. As always, we are open to listening to your thoughts and are hopeful that you'll give us the opportunity to put some reality to what the WGA has told you. The decision is yours, and we encourage you to consider it carefully and vote.

Thanks very much.
patrice.

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