

## IEG Members Statement in Support of the ADDITIONAL LITERARY MATERIAL Credit

We, the undersigned members and supporters of the Inclusion and Equity Group of the WGAW, stand in firm support of the adoption of the new Additional Literary Material end credit for theatrical features.

We believe this credit will correct an ongoing injustice and give proper on-screen credit to ALL writers who are employed to write on features. But it will be of particular help to underrepresented writers.

Writers of color, women writers, older writers, disabled writers, and LGBTQ+ writers are often hired late in the screenwriting process to do dialogue polishes, targeted character work, or “authenticity passes”. These contributions usually don’t meet the high percentage thresholds necessary to achieve “Written by”, “Screenplay by” or “Story by” credit. And with no other options available, these writers’ names are simply erased by the arbitration process.

As if the writers never existed.

But they do exist. Their words have been written. Their dialogue has been spoken by actors. And the movies they’ve helped write have been enjoyed by audiences all over the world – without any record of these writers having ever worked on the films.

Beyond the mountain of obstacles underrepresented writers face in the world at large, this level of erasure in the feature world is an oversight at best and gatekeeping at worst. When underrepresented screenwriters finally break through and land jobs in the industry, the fact that their names can be permanently deleted from their work – is not just a “tough break”.

It can end a career before it even starts.

With nothing to show for their efforts, these writers are forced to climb the same steep mountain again and again – striving for that first on-screen credit, that first mention on IMDB, some evidence that they’ve been a part of a produced film. Going without a track record of being hired has real, demonstrable consequences on one’s quote, resume and negotiating power.

Throughout history, we’ve seen the contributions of oppressed groups excluded from the narrative (i.e., NASA’s Katherine Johnson) and the buck stops here. That a writer can contribute up to 49% of a final shooting script and not receive any form of onscreen credit is unconscionable. A union is supposed to protect its members. And that means protecting their names. And ensuring that their work is credited.

The “Additional Literary Material” credit takes a small step towards doing just that. It does not subtract from the traditional writing credits. It does not siphon off money from the

residuals pool. It merely states the truth. That every writer who worked on a film exists and that their contribution matters.

Please join us in voting YES on the Screen Credits Referendum. Let's end the erasure of the names of our hard-working fellow members. And properly acknowledge the work of every writer who contributes to the movies we enjoy.

Adele Lim  
Aimee Lagos  
Amy Aniobi  
Amy Rardin  
Bianca Sams  
Dan Hernandez  
Danny Tolli  
David Slack  
Doug Atchison  
Earl Richey Jones  
Glen Mazzara  
Jessica O'Toole  
Joey Falco

Julian Kiani  
Karen Struck  
Katrina Mathewson  
LaToya Morgan  
Liz Hsiao Lan Alper  
Lori Lakin Hutcherson  
Melissa Rosenberg  
Prentice Penny  
Robb Chavis  
Terri Kopp  
Todd R. Jones  
Zoe Marshall

## The “ADDITIONAL LITERARY MATERIAL” Credit - A CON STATEMENT

We, the undersigned, oppose the 2021 credits referendum that seeks to establish an “Additional Literary Material” end credit.

Although this is among the more reasonable of the many end-credit proposals that have been broached over the years, that is partly because the credit it awards – a record of employment and not of authorship – is of very little value.

Will a low-value credit be helpful to anyone’s writing career? Will it change the conversation about that writer? Will it lead to jobs or higher pay? If we thought so, we might be in favor. Yes, employers who become aware of the credit will understand that you worked on a movie – something your reps would tell them anyway. But adding a single name to IMDB under “I was hired to work on this” will likely have as much impact as an acting credit for “Soldier #3.” Will it indicate your work is on the screen? Not necessarily. That you were hired and then got fired? Maybe. Twenty such credits will mean you failed to achieve authorship twenty times. The people who support this proposal portray it as telling the truth. But what truth is it telling?

And if the ALM will not enhance an individual writer’s status, what will it do to feature writers as a whole? We think it will inflict further damage of the very kind we have already suffered for so many years. It will cause increased bewilderment among an already-confused press and public, who will jump to conclusions about the sausage-making that will in most cases be unwarranted. And it will expose more of that sausage-making itself – an ugly enough process as is, and one that uniquely sullies the status of writers.

Even if you think landing a low-value end credit will polish up your individual status, it certainly won’t make the status of writers in our industry any shinier.

One more thing. This proposal gives the companies – i.e. management – a say in something that might be construed by some as a writing credit. We in this Guild fought very hard to have sole dominion over writing credits. And though one of the distinctions in the proposal is that this is specifically NOT a writing credit, it still cedes ground to management in a way that’s bad for us all.

Some companies will ask the Guild for the waiver that allows the ALM, but some may not. And that could result in exactly the kind of situation the credit’s supporters wish to do away with: a world of haves and have-nots.

Again, if we thought the potential benefit would counterbalance the drawbacks, we might change our view. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. The damage would considerably outweigh any benefit.

It is for all these reasons that we say, out of a spirit of solidarity with all writers and a proper respect for our standing, vote NO to this proposal.

Stephen Schiff  
Ian Deitchman

Jonathan Fernandez  
Jason Filardi  
Peter Filardi  
Scott Frank  
John Gatins  
Mark Gibson  
Michael Gilvary  
James V. Hart  
Phil Hay  
David Iserson  
Robert Mark Kamen  
Robert King  
Craig Mazin  
John Raffo  
Ryan Rowe  
Randi Mayem Singer  
Elena Song  
Malcolm Spellman

**Member comments to WGA 2021 Screen Credits Referendum, “Additional Literary Material” per 10/18/21 request for Member Pro and Con Statements:**

Submitting Members Position on Referendum:

CON as written, PRO with modifications.

Comment Summary:

The submitting members feel that an Additional Literary Material (ALM) credit is advisable on some projects, but that the current proposal is too blunt an instrument that treats all feature production credits the same, when in reality there is great disparity in how feature films originate, and as such any new ruling for allowance of an Additional Literary Material credit should not be single faceted.

Comment and Suggested Approach to Proposed Credit Revision:

The submitting members of this comment feel that it does make sense to allow an Additional Literary Material credit on IP-driven studio projects such as Marvel or DC lit based properties. It is well known and expected from the start that such projects will have multiple writers contribute. Additionally, with many IP driven projects, particularly those originating from serial material or material that has been published or produced in multiple iterations, the original IP is the result of the work of perhaps many dozens of writers over many years. With such a project, no single writer can truly claim authorship, so allowing an Additional Literary Material credit will allow for equitable recognition of all contributing writers, at no expense to the traditionally credited writers.

Similarly, with feature projects originating from single author material such as novels, and where the IP was optioned by a studio or producer and assigned to a screenwriter, it does not seem unreasonable to allow ALP credit for any contributing writers as it is understood that the credited screenwriter is not the author of the material.

However, the submitting members believe a line should be drawn between projects originating with IP optioned by producers and assigned, and projects which originate from member created original screenplays or IP optioned by a member and developed on spec.

The Guild has always held sole credit for the original feature screenplay as sacred, and worthy of greater protection. This is enshrined in the higher contribution

threshold that must be met for a subsequent writer(s) to be awarded shared credit on the original screenplay as compared to the adapted screenplay.

We believe this higher threshold must be maintained for both original screenplays and writer-driven adaptations for a myriad of reasons, not the least of which is our belief that without a contribution threshold most directors will come to insist on a writing contract as a condition of attachment to projects. We further believe that Agents will have an increased incentive to force client rewrites upon producers, even when not needed, or when the originating writer could easily address the notes as a matter of course, which is currently an unfortunate, but all too common occurrence. In both situations, we feel that a minimal contribution from a well-know director or subsequent writer, diminishes the sole credit to the writer of an original screenplay, and may cause future employers to give more credit than may be due to such well-know director or subsequent writer, thereby undermining well-earned future employment opportunity to writers of original material.

As such, we propose the following modifications to the current ALM proposal:

ALM credit to be allowed as proposed for all producer-driven adaptations of existing IP where adaptation work is done on paid assignment.

ALM credit to ONLY be allowed on films produced from original screenplays, screenplays adapted from IP optioned by the writer, and screenplays adapted from a writer's own original IP once the traditional thresholds for shared credit are breached.

Once traditional shared credit thresholds are breached for these three types of writer originating/driven projects, then the commenters believe ALM credit is appropriate for all writers contributing to the final produced film.

The submitting members thank The Board for their service to the Guild, and their consideration of this input.

Best Regards,

Craig Stiles  
Lee Shipman  
JT Allen  
Ivan Menchell  
Pierce Gardner  
Ed Horowitz  
Josann McGibbon

## **ADDITIONAL LITERARY MATERIAL CREDIT REFERENDUM – PRO STATEMENT**

### A STUDIO SCREENWRITER'S PERSPECTIVE

*Note: the views in this statement reflect my own, personal experience, and my statement is made as a fellow working screenwriter, not as an elected Board Member presenting any form of official communication.*

As studio screenwriters, we spend most of our working lives writing on films for which we don't get any form of credit. We expect it, we accept it, it's just part of our narrow end of this business. The vast majority of written movies never get made, and those that do survive studio development can easily have had ten or more writers working on them at one point or another by the time they make it to screen. Sometimes we work in hopes of writing that golden draft that gets the film greenlit with our name on it – other times we work knowing full well that the major, last-minute changes the studio needs us to do to fix the story will never rise to the 33% requirement of getting a "Screenplay By" credit and the residuals and honor that comes with it. But at least we will get paid for our work. At least our agent will know. Maybe the studio executives will hire us on the next thing.

That, at least, is what we tell ourselves. In reality, agents, producers, studio heads – and these days, even studios themselves – come and go, and word of mouth means less than it ever has. In my own career, I'd been employed continually for 10 years writing over 15 feature projects before I got my very first screen credit. Was it because it was my best script? No. Was it even the released film that I'd had the biggest hand in creating? Not by a long shot. By then I'd become one of the best-paid, most sought-after screenwriters of tent-pole movies in town, and the credit came right about the time that my agent was politely informing me that if I didn't get a screen credit soon, my great career would soon evaporate from beneath me. I was lucky. I suppose a lot of screenwriter careers start with a credit on a film they can call their own – but for me, my first screen credit felt more like a medal of honor given after a long battle of attrition.

Our outdated feature credits system doesn't really serve writers WITH screen credits all that well, either. When we see a "Screenplay By" credit on a studio film, we know – and the press knows and the industry knows – that the movie that made it to screen with a name or three on it was often the result of the work and dedication of other writers whose names have been erased, whose work must be denied. Whether these shadow writers wrote material that did not quite amount to the 33% minimum (or the nearly unattainable 50% for work based on original material) to garner a full screen credit, or if they wrote unused drafts that kept a movie alive through development, whether their work was great but the director hated it, or if their work was flat-out terrible, all those writers, in fact, did work that ultimately led to a finished, released film, without any credit to show for it. This institutional denial creates public suspicion that undermines the ultimate value of a screen credit more than any clear delineation between work credits and authorship credits ever could.

And *only* in the craft of screenwriting can you work for days, months and sometimes years on a movie and have your name nowhere to be found on the final product. An actor who says a single line on screen, an animator who worked on a scene entirely cut from the theatrical release, a director's assistant, or a caterer – all are guaranteed credit for the work they did. Television writers have long had authorship credits as well as employment credits, and no one seems to confuse just what those two things mean.

As screenwriters, we must rely entirely on our representatives and industry word of mouth to keep our careers going between credits, because our own Guild's 1940's-era feature credits system all but guarantees that a *majority* of studio screenwriters see the *majority* of our life's work erased from history.

We believe that the proposed "Additional Literary Material" credit will create a truthful public record of the writers who worked on a film, while underlining the primacy and hard-earned significance of our existing screen credits.

It bears repeating: the proposed ALM credit is simply a public record of which writers were hired to work on a film – as such, it is an end-crawl commemoration of those writers whose work did *not* rise to the level of "Screenplay By," "Written By" or story credit. The value of such an employment credit could be *very great* to those of us committing our working lives to studio feature writing – yet it would mean *damnably little* to anyone seeking credit where none is due, or to anyone who is not, in fact, a career screenwriter.

Should the referendum pass, this more balanced and truthful features credit system will ultimately increase the value and meaning of our existing screen credits, while also giving screenwriters back what we have lost: the sole authorship and story rights to our own work histories and lived careers.

For the sake of everyone dedicating their lives to the craft of feature screenwriting, please join us in voting YES to the referendum.

Yours in Solidarity,

Dante W. Harper,  
Philip Gawthorne,  
Mitchell LaFortune,  
Cat Vasko,  
Matt Billingsly,  
David H. Steinberg,  
Kyle Ward,  
Barnett Brettler,  
Daniel Kunka,  
Russell Sommer,  
and E. Nicholas Mariani.



I'm a feature writer, I support this change to our credit system, and hope you will vote "yes."

At the heart of this issue is respect for writers and respect for our work. TV writers know as well as feature writers that we are being devalued and disrespected in numerous ways, including the growing scourge of free work. Disrespect for writers is as old as the business itself.

Our effort to combat this inequity is undermined by a fatal flaw: NO ONE DISRESPECTS US AS MUCH AS WE DISRESPECT OURSELVES.

Studios don't strip writers of credit for movies they've written on. Directors and producers don't strip us of credit. We do it to ourselves.

Thirty years ago it was decided that writing credit for feature films should focus on a writer or two (three in extreme cases, but never more than that, no matter how many other writers actually contributed to what appears on the screen).

The belief was that this would somehow lead to writers being perceived as more important (as if the studios didn't know exactly who wrote what), so we decided to promote a few at the expense of many others, even if it wasn't fair or accurate.

If we want to make a *serious* case that we deserve respect, that our work has value, we must start by getting our own house in order. We need to start respecting the work of all writers, and stop erasing the contributions of those who failed to reach the 33% or 50% thresholds mandated by the current system.

The "nays" are promoting the idea that by giving a token acknowledgment to all writers on a project that we are devaluing writers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

What devalues writers is erasing their names and crediting their work to another writer.

What devalues writers is denying them any acknowledgment whatsoever.

Under our current system, if you lose credit on a movie, you're not even allowed to publicly talk about your contribution. Instead, you must silently play along with a charade.

We have a chance to fix this self-inflicted wound. That some continue to defend a morally indefensible system reflects just how deeply we have internalized decades of abuse.

Is this a perfect solution? No. Is it the solution I would've drafted if I'd been given a magic wand? No. But it's a meaningful start. As always, there are as many opinions as there are members.

I've seen numerous people gripe about this detail or that. Others are voting "no" because they believe there are bigger, more important changes needed. But like it or not, this is an A or B choice. There is no option C.

This referendum is a litmus test on the membership's appetite to reform our credit system. If it passes, perhaps we can address some of the other concerns raised by the "nays." But if this fails, if we cannot come together to make even the tiniest, token change to our credits, then we will not have the chance to do so again for quite some time. It's taken 30 years just to get this incremental reform to the table. Since we have to start somewhere, it makes sense to start small. In a year or two, we can reassess and decide if the ALM is working as intended, or if we should consider further reform.

The "nays" say the rewards aren't worth the risk. But the truth is, our ability to rationally examine risks versus rewards is hindered by a cognitive bias (one of many) known as "loss aversion." We fear losses more than we appreciate gains. So much so that losses are *perceived* to have twice the impact as a commensurate gain. The pain of losing \$20 is *double* the joy of finding \$20.

So what? Of course we're afraid of losses. Why does this matter? It matters because loss aversion leads to bad decisions, irrational decisions, in which people choose a worse outcome over a better one. One of our most powerful emotions, fear, overrides our ability to accurately assess--and accept--real gains. It's why most people, including professionals, are terrible at betting on the stock market.

In this case, we have some feature writers who are willing to forego an important, just, and overdue gain for themselves and their fellow writers out of fear that the bogeyman (directors, studio executives, actors) are coming to "steal" their credit.

What they're missing is that credit is already being stolen from writers. Tragically--and ironically--we're doing it to ourselves. Some people would like you to believe this is for our own good. That erasing writers somehow strengthens writers.

It's time to stop letting fear dictate our credit policies. It's time to do the right thing, and start acknowledging and respecting the work of all of our members, not just a chosen few.

Please vote 'yes' for the ALM credit. Thank you.

Matt Billingsly  
Matt Altman  
Rod Blackhurst  
Andrea Ciannavei  
Ben Deeb

Garrett Frawley  
James Simpson

As a former Board member and someone who spent the first half of his career solely as a feature writer I have heard, appreciated, and lived both sides of the end credits argument. I know the frustration of working for years and looking at an empty IMDB page. I also know just how hard-fought, important, and valuable that first feature Written By credit is. As WGA members we all want to be working writers. That is always the immediate goal. But long term, and collectively, we strive to be authors. We ARE authors.

And ultimately, AUTHORSHIP IS MORE VALUABLE THAN EMPLOYMENT. Why? Because it must be earned. Because it is far rarer. Because it is assigned after thoughtful adjudication by fellow writers. And we diminish it at our own collective peril.

As WGA members it is in all our best interests to celebrate our authorship, to raise it up, to fiercely protect it. Instead, I believe this Additional Literary Material referendum, well-intentioned as it is, does the opposite. By celebrating *employment*, it devalues our most prized commodity. In fact, that really isn't in question. Objectively, inherently, by its very existence, the acknowledgement of additional literary material on the back end of a credit crawl detracts from the value of the front-end authorial credit. There is no world in which it doesn't. The question is, is the trade-off worth it?

The Additional Literary Material credit is simply a record of employment. We can agree that there is *some* value in that. Writers will get a new IMDB credit - "I was at some point, in some way, hired by BLANK to perform writing services on BLANK." Something their agent and/or manager are already presumably talking up. But *because* the ALM credit doesn't arbitrate contribution it becomes ripe for abuse by actors, directors and, yes, our fellow WRITERS – anyone who lost a credit arbitration but can now use an end credit to tout their unprovable contribution. "I wrote on X award-winning film." "I came up with all that stuff you like." Will our working rules prevent against this? Not likely. What is the point in winning a credit arbitration against a powerful director when that director can *still* get credit for writing?

Will the ALM credit help emerging writers get more work? I certainly hope so. But there's no certainty that it will. Will the ALM credit detract from a writer's hard-earned front-end Written By credit? Always.

Here's something else we can all agree on... the art and craft of screenwriting continues to be devalued by our industry with one step deals, roundtables, cattle calls, the Film By credit, to name a few. But I don't think the solution is to *lean into* that devaluation. We can't combat the devaluation of screenwriting by accepting it. You don't see the DGA doing that with their director members in TV. They fight like hell for one episode, one director.

The WGA has a credit determination process that has been honed over decades. Not to say it isn't flawed or warranting change. But it's there for a reason. To arbitrate AUTHORSHIP. That has been a foundational cornerstone of our Guild. Literally, our reason for being. Until now.

What it boils down to for me is this... writers are unlike any other member of the industry. Not better, different. We are the only ones who author intellectual property. That is our unique value asset. We are more than just employees. We are not interchangeable. We can't just be swapped out, even though it often feels like that's the case. Certainly, we shouldn't value OURSELVES that way. Ultimately, it's our authorship, not our employment, that defines us as writers. I'm voting to protect that. I'm voting no.

Ian Deitchman  
Board of Directors, 2009-2013  
Co-Chair, Guild Screenings Committee

With the support of:

Nick Antosca  
Simran Baidwan  
Andrea Berloff  
Michael Brandt  
Shauna Cross  
Ethan Drogen  
Jonathan Fernandez  
Liz Friedman  
Chris Fife  
John Gatins  
Michael Gilvary  
Clifford Green  
David Iserson  
Rian Johnson  
Laeta Kalogridis  
Bill Kelly  
Robert King  
Jay Kogen  
Rob LaMorgese  
Justin Marks  
Craig Mazin  
Dalan Musson  
Abdi Nazemian  
Kristin Robinson  
Ryan Rowe  
Stephen Schiff  
Randi Mayem Singer  
Holly Sorensen  
Mark Swift  
Kurt Voelker  
David Weissman  
Cormac Wibberley

Marianne Wibberley

On the credits referendum

Howard A. Rodman  
Past president, WGAW

John Howard Lawson, the first president of the Screen Writers Guild, put it this way: “a writer's name is his most cherished possession. It is his creative personality, the symbol of the whole body of his ideas and experience.” And as the Screen Writers Guild — our predecessor — gained a sense of its own power, among its very first struggles was the fight to wrest control of the screen credit from the studios. We wanted the name in front of the movie to reflect who wrote it, not whom Sam Goldwyn or Harry Cohn wanted to reward that particular week.

In 1941, we won that battle. And for eighty years now, it's been our Guild that determines credits, not the studios or networks.

Along the way — to preserve the dignity of the writing credit, and to counter the notion that screenwriting is a monkeys/typewriters affair — we decided that a maximum of three writers (or writing teams) should receive screen credit. This had great utility, and made the writing credit more prestigious: it was based on contribution, not contract. But it also introduced a deeply unfortunate artifact: we have pretended for the longest time that anyone who wasn't credited on a film didn't have a hand in writing it. Shouldn't be talked about. Shouldn't be mentioned.

And this has made liars of us all.

I have sole credits on films where other writers contributed substantially; I've been congratulated for having written brilliant lines of dialogue that I didn't write. The choice that's presented to me: accept praise I don't deserve, or thank the other writers whom our own Guild says should never be publicly spoken of.

And on the other side: as is the case with so many of us, there exist several films I wrote on where my contribution did not rise to the level of front-end credit. Under current rules I am honor- and Guild-bound to remain mute. I'm proud of my work. But I can't talk about it. It's the screenwriter's omerta.

What (at least to me) is worse: there's a film on which I have sole credit and wrote every single fucking word. But because under current rules a sole credit can mean a multiplicity of things, because that sole credit so often hides the contributions of many others, no one knows that this film is one I wrote from beginning to end.

This is why we all too often see reviews that say “directed by X, from a screenplay credited to Y...” Which is demeaning to all of us. A-list writers, emerging writers, first writers, second writers, rewriters, punch-up writers, writer/directors, writer/producers— Writers.

Did someone write on a project on which I'm credited? I'm perfectly okay with that contribution acknowledged in the end-credits. How does this diminish my work? How does

this harm my dignity? What it does do: allows me to talk, honestly, about what I did, what I didn't do. Allows us all to step out from under the silence.

To me, the choice is stark and simple. We can vote yes on this referendum and give a modicum of acknowledgment to everyone hired to write on a film. Or we can continue to give no acknowledgement at all for what is, at times, years of real work.

Long story short: I want a credit system that doesn't make liars of us all.

That shouldn't be too much to ask.

Howard A. Rodman  
David A. Goodman  
Lauren Hynek  
Nick Kazan  
Elizabeth Martin



## **ADDITIONAL LITERARY MATERIAL - PRO STATEMENT**

For decades, our current credits system has meant that screenwriters can work for weeks, months, or even years on a movie and yet their names are nowhere to be found in the credits. Whereas every cast and crew member, even someone who was hired for just one day, receives on-screen credit.

TV writers receive credit on all episodes on which they are employed. ***Why do we have a more exclusionary standard for features writers?***

In 2020 alone 185 screenwriters did not receive on-screen credit after having worked on a feature.

It's tough enough to launch and sustain a career in features. Hidden employment histories and empty IMDb pages that do not accurately reflect a screenwriter's career only make it harder.

This new credit would not change the way the traditional writing credits are determined or arbitrated. The new Additional Literary Material end credit simply acknowledges fact: ***this writer worked on this movie.***

We do not need to be stuck in this status-quo where our credits no longer reflect the way features projects are developed and written.

It's time to turn the page.

It's time for more inclusive, fair and accurate credits.

We wholeheartedly support the adoption of the new Additional Literary Material end credit for theatrical features.

**We are voting YES.**

LISA ALBERT  
KIMBERLY BARRANTE  
STEPHEN BELBER  
MATT BILLINGSLY  
RACHEL BLOOM  
JONATHAN BRAYLOCK

DOUG ATCHISON  
JANET SCOTT BATCHLER  
MILLA BELL-HART  
ROD BLACKHURST  
LAUREN SCHUKER BLUM  
BARNETT BRETTLER

JOHN AUGUST  
STUART BEATTIE  
EDWARD ALLEN BERNERO  
CARTER BLANCHARD  
VALERIE BRANDY  
AARON BROWNSTEIN

ANGELINA BURNETT  
CHRISTOPHER CANTWELL  
ANDREA CIANNAVEI  
CARTER COVINGTON  
BRAD DESCH  
WILL DUNN  
KATIE EDGERTON  
SHELBY FARRELL  
DANA FOX  
ASHLEY GABLE  
JOHN GARY  
DAVID A. GOODMAN  
DANTE HARPER  
ERIC HEISSERER  
A.M HOMES  
STUART HAZELDINE  
NICK KAZAN  
CALLIE KHOURI  
CHRISTOPHER KYLE  
DEIRDRE MANGAN  
ROBERT MCKITTRICK  
KEVIN LEE MILLER  
KIERAN MULRONEY  
IFY NWADIWE  
LEE PATTERSON  
PHIL ALDEN ROBINSON  
TODD ROSENBERG  
TYLER RUGGIERI  
DEBORAH SCHOENEMAN  
CLARE SERA  
ROBIN SHUSHAN  
CHRISTINA STARZAK  
JONATHAN STOKES  
BOB TZUDIKER  
COLIN TREVORROW  
NONI WHITE  
ED YEAGER

MATT BYRNE  
SUSIE SINGER CARTER  
JULIA LILLIS COHEN  
KAREN CRONER  
STEVE DESMOND  
CARLETON EASTLAKE  
RYAN ENGLE  
CAMERON FAY  
TERRY CURTIS FOX  
BRENDEN GALLAGHER  
HENRY GAYDEN  
DAN GREGOR  
RACHEL HASTINGS  
DAN HERNANDEZ  
MELISSA HUNTER  
LARRY KARASZEWSKI  
MATTHEW KELLARD  
KYLE KILLEN  
MARK LAFFERTY  
ELIZABETH MARTIN  
AARON MENDELSON  
DAVID MIRKIN  
MICHELE MULRONEY  
ROCKNE S. O'BANNON  
ADAM R. PERLMAN  
HOWARD A. RODMAN  
ERIC ROTH  
JOE RUSSO  
ALLISON SCHROEDER  
ELLEN SHANMAN  
JAMES V. SIMPSON  
HANK STEINBERG  
TEDDY TENENBAUM  
ALISON TATLOCK  
ZACK WHEDON  
GARY WHITTA  
RAFAEL YGLESIAS

JUSTIN CALEN-CHENN  
DANIEL CASEY  
ADAM CONOVER  
DEBORAH DEAN DAVIS  
TIMOTHY DOWLING  
MICHAEL ALAN EDDY  
DANIELLE EVENSON  
MICHAEL FONTANA  
STUART FRIEDEL  
RODRIGO GARCIA  
KEITH GIGLIO  
LARRY GROSS  
CHRIS HAZZARD  
TYLER HISEL  
LAUREN HYNEK  
NANCI KATZ  
LIZ KERIN  
RICHARD KLETTER  
AIMEE LAGOS  
GLEN MAZZARA  
CHRISTOPHER MILLER  
MIKE MOORE  
MARSHA NORMAN  
VIJAL PATEL  
LUVH RAHKE  
CHRISTOPHER ROGERS  
MIKE ROYCE  
JAMES SCHAMUS  
TOM SCHULMAN  
BEN SHIFFRIN  
PATRICK SEAN SMITH  
DAVID H. STEINBERG  
DYAN TRAYNOR  
VANESSA TAYLOR  
ANDRA WHIPPLE  
KAT WOOD  
ALISON ZEIDMAN

# 669

That's the number of writers in 2019-20 who were hired to write on a theatrical feature, but received no form of credit.

They were not allowed to even talk about being employed on the project.

They were required to deny their work history.

## SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTY NINE

And that's in just a two-year span.

*Think of the thousands of credits writers have missed out on over the years.*

*Think of the careers that might have been changed.*

Concerns that directors and producers will try to steal our credits deflect from the fact that **our own Guild is already doing so.**

*The call is coming from inside the house.*

Fact: directors already regularly receive writing credit on movies under our current system.

In 2019, out of 322 theatrical movies, directors received credit on 160.

Sole credit on 84 projects. Shared credit on 76 projects.

That same year, **454 writers were denied any form of credit** after having worked on those movies.

## FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY FOUR

A director's (or A-list writer's) name appearing in the new Additional Literary Material credits **would serve as proof** that they DID NOT write the whole movie or most of the movie.

So if you're an **emerging writer** who gets a main credit with a director or well-known writer in the end credits, *it's proof you kicked butt.*

**YOU** did the lion's share of the writing. **YOU** earned main credit over these other more established writers. *Good for you.*

And if it's true (which is debatable) that directors and actors and producers will be desperate to qualify for this new Additional Literary Material credit, presumably it's because it has value.

If this credit has value ***why on earth would we want to prevent our own members from receiving it?***

It simply defies logic to claim that having more credits and a fuller, more complete resume will not help writers.

*"Having more credits really hurts my clients!"*, said no agent, ever.

Our current credits system has been in place for decades. It's been handed down to us. It's all most members have ever known.

It's a system that allows writers to take credit for other writers' work.

It's a system that erases the work histories of writers.

It's a system that denies credit to writers who make valuable contributions to movies.

It's a system that is exclusionary, dishonest, and intentionally opaque.

But it's not carved in stone.

The Guild is us, we are the Guild.

We have the power to change it.

Let's not just think what our credits system does for **us**, but what it does for **others**.

Writers deserve a more inclusive, fair, accurate system.

# **VOTE FOR CHANGE. VOTE YES.**

Stuart Beattie

Rod Blackhurst

Angelina Burnett

Adam Conover

Timothy Dowling

Michael Alan Eddy

John Gary

Stuart Hazeldine

Gregg Hurwitz

Mark Lafferty

Tyler Ruggieri

Bob Tzudiker

Noni White

# Why should TV writers care:

We know you're under deadline so we'll be brief.

We're TV writers against this credit proposal because we know we'll be moving back and forth between streaming and features. We think you will too. Everybody's fluid these days. Some projects scream out to be made as streaming shows; some scream out to be features.

And our guess is if you're doing a feature, you're probably, like us, writing an original. You probably have a great idea in the back of your mind and you either pitch it, or write it from scratch.

And that's the thing: they're original ideas. And that is what's most endangered by these new credit rules.

These rules are a great boon for rewriters who wouldn't otherwise win credit, and directors who like to polish, because they expand their resumes without facing the blank page.

And here's the thing: we're all for sharing credit when it's warranted. We're even for end credits when a writer has actually contributed content to the movie. But getting credit because an agent negotiated a contract, despite the contribution level of the writer, is just insane.

And what's sad is the Guild is losing track of the sole writer or team creating a movie from scratch, usually in a dingy apartment or dorm room, eating ramen, and dreaming up something from nothing— over months, even years.

For some reason that sole writer, or team, is supposed to feel guilty because some rewriter or directing-polisher is denied credit— even when nothing of their work remains.

And anyone who thinks a director getting a contract to polish is rare these days doesn't understand how our credit rules change the business. If directors, or their agents, think they can get writing credit for doing what they're doing anyway, then—trust me—they will negotiate an automatic contract to polish the script.

Directors on promotional tours love talking about how they're Kubrick: not only did they direct the movie, they were instrumental in the writing of it. And this credit gives them a lie: that they shared credit with you, the writer. You could've worked on the script for years. The director could've added some lines on the set—and you now share credit.

So much is made of caterers getting end credits but not writers. But if that caterer is fired and replaced, he or she DOES NOT GET CREDIT. The same happens with replaced directors. They don't get credit, and no one goes crying to their guild that it's a miscarriage of justice.

You know why? Because directors understand something that mattered to the Writers Guild. In fact, it was the reason the Writers Guild was formed...

Writing is about authorship. It's not about participation. There. We guess William Goldman would want that underlined. Writing is about authorship.

So, TV writers: you may think you'll never get fucked by this new credit system, and you may be right. But, our guess is most of us would start, or restart, our feature career by writing an original, and again, these are credit rules that take from original writers.

So much is made by the proponents of these new credits that they will help marginalized communities. One supporter even went so far as arguing that it was racist to vote against them!

But, let us be so bold. It helps you if you're a rewriter from a marginalized community. It hurts you if you're an *original* writer from a marginalized community. So you decide.

Very simply, in our opinion, you should vote against these new proposed rules. They are poorly devised. Politely ask the committee to return to the drawing board and create real end credits that are actually tied to TRUTH. The truth of contributing something to the final shooting script. Isn't that what the whole point of our credit system should be?

Now go back to your deadline, and we'll go back to ours.

Robert King  
Michelle King  
Malcolm Spellman  
Nichelle Tramble Spellman  
Ted Humphrey

You're a busy person. And that's why we're *not* going to make you wade through a complex, lengthy statement that tries to convince you to vote in favor of the new "Additional Literary Material" (aka ALM) credit. Instead, the writers of this statement are going to keep it brief, factual, and to the point.

**Because we believe the facts alone make the case for the ALM.**

If you're undecided, read on. Bullet points below. That's right— we're leaving our fates up to bullet points. That's how confident we are in the facts and what they tell us. If you're thinking about leaving your computer to go get a snack (because aren't we always thinking of snacks?) ... WAIT. Read this first.

- 1. FACT ONE:** Writers in features are being erased. Under the current system, you could write 45% of a draft, and not see your name on screen or even be able to claim a legitimate credit. That clever bit from the stand up routine you wrote ages ago? If you put it in the movie and you don't get a credit, it's now all used up. The character you modeled after your beloved grandparent? You might not see your name on screen for that movie either, even though the character still wears the nickname ("*Peanut*"), of the Grandparent you loved. One writer on this letter started to model a character in a script she was writing after a loved one, but stopped because she couldn't bear the idea of knowing that she might get completely erased from the credits while simultaneously giving such a personal piece of herself to the film. Even when the personal stakes aren't high, we contend that a writer's work is a piece of art that is inseparable from its creator, ethically requiring acknowledgement in the form of credit.
- 2. FACT TWO:** Tentpoles are winning, and Feature Writers are in a system that mirrors television more and more everyday. With the rise of tentpoles and major franchises winning out in the feature space, gone are the days of common spec script sales with one writer employed from start to finish. On any given studio tentpole, a dozen or more writers may have worked on the project. One writer can kick the direction of the movie into a different gear, providing a contribution at least as valuable as the craft services team, or the gaffer, or wardrobe (all of whom rightly get a credit at the end of the film). If those contributions merit a credit, doesn't the writer who contributed a meaningful percentage of the script deserve one too? In television, almost every writer who contributed to the formation on a series gets a credit. Credits like "staff writer" or "executive producer" take *nothing* away from the credit of "showrunner." The writers of this letter contend that "screenplay by" will continue to be viewed by many as the feature equivalent of "showrunner," while the ALM simply gives other contributors the opportunity to not be erased from the project entirely.

3. **FACT THREE:** So called “diversity passes” don’t help DEI when they result in erasure. It’s become commonplace for studios to hire women and people of color to rewrite a script in order to ensure authenticity, perspective, and an “own voices” point of view. But sadly, these passes often don’t change enough of the existing draft to meet the current threshold for a “screenplay by” credit. When this happens, the writer who did the authenticity pass is completely erased, with not even a mention in the end credits. How is the current credit system helping that writer? Wouldn’t it be nice if that writer could go to their next general meeting and say, “here’s what I contributed as a team member on X movie?” Credits help writers get hired.
  
4. **FACT FOUR:** If not now, never. This is the *first* step in improving a system that is out of date and not reflective of today’s marketplace, where it’s almost unheard of to see just one feature writer working on a given project. If you’re on the fence and think there’s certain things you’d like to see changed about our credits system, like the exact title of the credit or the threshold for contributions, please keep in mind that only a YES vote will give us the chance to finesse the particulars. We need this YES vote from membership to get the ball rolling and to show enough members care about credit reform in general to make it worth addressing. It’s taken more than ten years to get this referendum up for consideration. Let’s make it count.

In closing, the facts say it all. The ALM will fight writer erasure and reflect the truth of the marketplace. The ALM will help writers get jobs, which writers *love* to get! Vote yes on the referendum. And if you’re still in doubt, just imagine watching a movie you wrote 45% of in a theatre... seated next to your high school bully. The bully who said you wouldn’t amount to anything. You turn to the bully and say “I wrote that,” and he says “... prove it, snot-for-brains.”

*And you don’t say anything.* Because you can’t prove it. Not without the ALM.

Vote yes on the ALM credit, and make sure writers aren’t erased. Because the writer who is erased... could be you. Now you can have a snack. Thank you for your time!

Warmly,

— Valerie Brandy

Susie Singer Carter

Ben Shiffrin

Nanci Katz

Christina Starzak



To Our Fellow WGA Members,

While others have put forward very solid, convincing and dire arguments to vote NO to this new credit proposal, we would like to take this opportunity to present a simpler, more aspirational reason for voting AGAINST it:

As we all know the business is changing, rapidly — the studios and networks have finally recognized that their audiences are hungry for new stories, from new voices, with new perspectives. It is an incredibly rich and vibrant time for story-telling, especially for young, up-and-coming writers.

Imagine one of those young writers, right now, he or she has just finished their spec script — it's their story, their voice and it's great.

Five, ten years ago, this story, this material, wouldn't have stood a chance in the marketplace but today, it sells and it gets made and, after the arbitration process, the writer is given sole credit.

This is their time to shine, to make their mark. Doesn't this writer deserve the same respect and rewards that were given others before them? Should this writer's singular achievement be shadowed by two, four, six, who-knows-how-many question marks lurking in the end credits of THEIR movie undermining their accomplishment?

Just at the moment when doors that have been closed for too long are starting to crack open, just when a very skewed playing field begins to level out, the Guild wants to change the credit process.

We say no. We say when this new generation of writers get their time in the spotlight they shouldn't have to share it. Because they sure as hell will have earned it.

VOTE NO

Mark Gibson  
Philip Halprin  
John Raffo  
Ryan Rowe  
Matt Sazama

Our arbitration process may be the best available, but it is far from perfect. A writer can work for months or even years on a film - author as much as 40 percent of what we see on screen - and still get erased from the credits.

We could change that percentage, but where would we draw the line? Should a writer who wrote 20 percent be erased? 10 percent? What about the writers who attached cast, raised financing, or who kept pushing the ball forward over years of development?

The ALM proposal credits writers for employment on a film - while reserving authorship for a select group. This is a common sense approach that is long overdue.

But some members are concerned. We have heard thoughtful arguments from writers we respect - writers with many credits - who ask, "What good is an ALM credit? Won't this just help A-Listers?" As with most debates in our Guild, everyone wants to stand up for the little guys.

**We are not names you recognize. We are not A-Listers. We are the little guys. And we are writing to articulate what an ALM credit would mean to us.**

Our system - which wipes out rewriters - may have been progressive a few decades ago. But a career path in features has, of course, changed. There is a vast ecosystem outside the studios where indie and international films employ new writers for originals and rewrites in equal measure. Studio movies are driven by IP - sometimes obscure IP - where a new writer may be third or fourth hired to take a fresh crack at the story... And that writer will find no protection from our credit system once the film is made.

An A-lister may not mind losing an arbitration - but that loss can be devastating for a writer breaking in. Producers size us up based on past work. Business Affairs builds offers based on Studio System. Many young writers straddle the line between TV and Features - and while their TV resume is easy to verify, their Feature resume is smoke and mirrors.

And that writer who wrote 40 percent of a movie doesn't just face the horror of erasure from a project that consumed years of valuable time. To add injury to insult - that writer's own Guild polices IMDB - removing "uncredited rewrites."

**This is our status quo: a labor union that erases the resumes of its members.**

If ALM passes - does it pose a risk to authorship? There will be situations where powerful people take an end credit. On some projects, writers will roll their eyes when a petty director slips in under "Additional Literary Material." But that's a sacrifice we should all be willing to make, because:

Another writer will use his ALM credit as an extra feather in his cap to book his first staffing job.

A BA exec will give a writer a smidge more because he sees an extra line on her IMDB page.

A writer will crawl out of a career slump when that movie he worked on three years ago is finally released and spurs fresh meetings.

A family will gather on opening day, in a mall theater. They'll be grinning during the whole movie, wait through every line of the credits, until they get to this weird-ass one that says: "Additional Literary Material." The ushers will already be cleaning the aisles, and they'll wonder why these lunatics are suddenly applauding. And the Mom will embarrass her daughter by sending a picture of her name against a black screen.

**"Additional Literary Material" doesn't mean much to the writer with a ton of credits. But it means everything to the writer with nothing.**

Writers without credit are asking for bare minimum respect. They don't want to mess up authorship. They don't even want the word "writer." They are asking for their name to appear at some point in the end credits. Maybe. Or at least on IMDB so that they - like anyone in any other entertainment job - can go out and find more work.

We all know we're looking at a big negotiation in 2023. Do we want to be a union that says, "NO" to uncredited writers, and then turns around and asks those same writers to authorize a strike? For better residuals? For the writers with credits?

Please read these statements. Give this referendum the consideration it deserves. And before you vote, please reach out to a writer who is not an A-Lister. And ask what an ALM credit would mean to them.

If you're asking us, we say, **"VOTE YES."**

Kimberly Barranté  
Matthew Billingsly  
Alexis C. Jolly  
Tyler Ruggeri  
Ellen Shanman  
Ben Shiffrin  
Amanda Toye  
Cat Vasko  
Dan Woodward

We're against the proposed credit rules for the following reasons:

1. This referendum can't get its thesis straight. Advocates constantly ask, "Why should someone who contributed 40% not have credit?" But then their proposed solution is: "Give everyone, even people who did nothing on the movie, credit." Which is it? Should we make sure the contributors get credit? Or should we make sure everyone gets credit? Because they are using "A" to sell this, but "B" is the answer, and B fundamentally obliterates A.

This doesn't satisfy the desire to "finally tell the truth" about credits. By including everyone who worked on every iteration of a movie project, including people who did nothing on the final movie, it only undermines the truth.

2. This referendum harms writers. That isn't hyperbole. One of the main reasons the Guild was founded was to both limit the writing credit and have control over it. If the WGA sanctions a credit that requires nothing more than participation, it opens the gates to those who have always yearned for, but have never *earned*, writing credit: directors, producers, actors. And if this measure passes, for the first time since our union's formation, production entities and even studio execs will be free to hand out a credit--by granting themselves or their friend, hairdresser, assistant, daughter's fiancé, whoever, a WGA minimum writing contract.

3. There is no guarantee that the studios will accept the waiver. This entire proposal hinges on the idea that the WGA adopted a waiver system to give TV Staff Writers credit. But not every studio grants that waiver. Staff writers are listed on some shows, and not others. This will likely be the case again.

Even if these participation writers are not on the screen, it's argued that they will be in IMBD.

Putting aside that IMBD is itself a studio, owned by Amazon, and could be sold or disappear at any moment (most organizations now know you don't put critical content on land you don't own), credits are already a mess on IMDB. And if your name is listed as a participating writer, it can be listed with possibly twenty other writers. Who may or may not have been on the screen.

How does that help anyone?

4. The emotional arguments for the proposed credit rules are compelling: even caterers are listed in the end credits. But a movie's credits are the credits for THAT PARTICULAR MOVIE, not the version ten years ago, not the one when it was at another studio.

If you were replaced as the costumer of a movie (or even a caterer), you do not get credit— even if some of your designs end up on screen. All of the creative classes work this way, as intellectual contribution, not as labor.

The same is true for the argument that staff writers on TV get credit, why shouldn't everyone who was ever employed on a movie? The fact is that the staff writer of a TV show is always working on the final version of that show. Always. (As is the caterer.) The correct analogy here is that the screenwriter is akin to a freelancer that pitches an episode. If it works, and gets made, that freelancer gets credit. If it doesn't they do not.

5. Perhaps the most compelling argument for the new credit rules is that this is important for women and people of color. If that were so, it would be a good one. But again, there is no evidence or data to support this claim. Of the less than 200 people who didn't get writing credit last year when their work was arbitrated, the majority, statistically, were white men.

But Hollywood has finally recognized and is now valuing the voice of women and POC, who are landing more original projects than ever before. So when white men—A list white men—are brought on to do a polish, should they share credit with this original voice, and rob her of her shine. If you do not think this is possible, ask any woman or POC if men ever claimed credit, or were automatically given credit, for their work.

So much of this conversation is about the people who labored and did not get credit. But equally likely is that your own, unique, spec from your life experience will be sold, and it will get a tune up by someone(s) more famous than you, or a line of people as it chugs through development. Do you want to share credit with 20 other people, some who may have contributed zero percent, for your passion project?

Finally, it is wrong to replace an imperfect system that we control, with a system that doesn't tell the truth about credits, and opens the floodgates to more people getting credit, diminishing the status of screenwriters. We deserve better. If we spent a tenth of the time we've spent on this credit proposal fighting concerns for all screenwriters—one-step-deals, capping P & H benefits for screenwriters at 250,000 K, screenwriters paying dues on more income than TV writers—all writers would be better off. This idea sounds nice as a gesture, but it is too flawed to be adopted.

Vote no on the proposed credit rules, and tell the guild which issues are truly vital to you.

Holly Sorensen  
Robert King  
Randi Mayem Singer  
David Iverson  
Ryan Rowe  
Ian Deitchman  
Clifford Green  
Marc Maurino  
Charlie Parlapanides  
Angela Workman  
Amy Turner  
Liz Maccie  
Wes Tooke  
Tiffany Romigh  
Kenneth Neibart  
Craig Mazin  
Michelle King  
Kat Smith