



WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA WEST

October 5, 2021

Dear Fellow Writer:

The Guild's Board and Council periodically appoint a special committee to review rules and procedures for determining credits in features. The current Screen Credits Review Committee is composed of working screenwriters who have experience as arbiters, as arbitrating writers, as consultants on arbitrations, and as members of Policy Review Boards. They are all very familiar with the Guild's Screen Credits Manual and procedures and work closely with credits staff and legal to draft proposals.

For many years now, members have debated whether all participating writers should have their names appear in the end credits of films.

[Per the Screen Credits Manual: "A participating writer is defined as a writer who has participated in the writing of the screenplay, or a writer who has been employed by the Company on the story/and or screenplay, or a "professional writer" who has sold or licensed literary material subject to the MBA."]

Currently, many screenwriters who have worked for weeks or months on a project do not receive any on-screen credit, nor are they listed in online databases. By comparison, every crew member - even someone who works for only one day - will see their names in the end credits and on IMDb. In television, writers' names appear on all episodes on which they are employed.

The more exclusionary standard for feature writers often results in "resume gaps" and empty IMDb pages that may not accurately reflect a screenwriter's career. In 2020 alone, 185 participating writers wrote on produced features for which they ultimately received no credit.

The committee proposes the creation of an "Additional Literary Material" credit, for all participating writers who do not receive writing credit on a feature. This new credit would denote employment or sale of material, not authorship.

In crafting the proposal for this potential new end credit, the committee worked diligently to preserve the distinction between authorship and participation and to protect the primacy of the traditional writing credits (e.g., "screenplay by," "written by") in the following ways:

- The words "writer" and "written" would not appear in the new end credit.
- The traditionally credited writer(s) - the "by" writers - would continue to receive all the residuals.
- The placement of the new end credit would be distanced from the main writing credit.
- Only traditionally credited writers would have their names appear in advertising and publicity, participate in publicity events, and be eligible for awards and script publication fees.

In this document, you'll find a summary of the proposal, background on the issue, specific language on what would change, and Frequently Asked Questions. Since there are strong opinions and many questions around this proposal, we recommend that you read the accompanying materials and participate in information sessions when deciding how to vote.

- Screen Credits Review Committee

Stephen Schiff, Co-chair
Michele Mulroney, Co-chair
John August
John Brancato
Christopher Kyle
Allison Schroeder