

*Crisis
Committees*

Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers of 2023



CHAIR: Griffin Haber

GWCA 30

December 6th

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Letter From the Chair

Hello. My name is Griffin Haber, and I am a freshman at George Washington University. I am a member of the Model UN team, as well as being a Freshman Representative on the International Affairs Society's Executive Board. I'm super excited to chair your committee as someone who's lived around people in front of and behind the camera his entire life. This is going to be a great conference, and I can't wait to watch and help you all improve your skills and have fun doing it.

Dear Delegates,

Hello delegates! My name is Lucas Flanagan, and I will be serving as your Crisis Director for the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers Committee (that's AMPTP for short)! If you have been to GW CIA before, you may remember me from the World's Fair committee from 2024 or the Shrek 3 committee from 2023, which is the year our committee takes place! I am a Senior at GW majoring in Political Science, and I am double-minoring in Linguistics and Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies. I am an active member of GW's own Model UN travel team, as well as a member of the GW Tabletop Gaming Society. I enjoy watching movies, especially animated films, so I was especially drawn to this committee topic. The 2023 strikes brought the intense politics behind moviemaking to center stage, which I hope you will debate and discuss in detail. Hopefully, this background guide should give a proper introduction to the committee's format and topics, but if you have any other questions, check the Delegate's Handbook or email me at lucas.flanagan@gwmail.gwu.edu, and be sure to CC (Carbon Copy) your advisors!

Without further ado: lights, camera, ACTION!

Lucas

Introduction

The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) is America's premier film and television trade association, composed of the largest companies in the industry that dominate the internationally recognized Hollywood film and television industry. The AMPTP acts as a collective bargaining representative for its member companies. This means that the AMPTP acts as the single representative to represent the interests of its over 350 member companies when negotiating with Unions.

Just as trade associations like the AMPTP represent companies as a single entity, Unions represent workers as a collective, using their group bargaining power to protect the interests of workers against companies. Unions act as the primary negotiating party to trade associations like the AMPTP. As Unions are composed of workers, they are able to call and organize strikes against companies as a method of negotiating changes for workers' conditions. Strikes are when employees of a company collectively refuse to come into work, leading the company to no longer be productive and thus unable to make money for the company. Companies are incentivized to avoid and/or end a strike quickly to ensure that they remain productive and avoid negative press that could impact consumer opinion. A successful strike will have a company concede to some or all of the workers' demands and will have workers return to work under a new agreement, typically negotiated by their Union. Strikes are typically called a "last resort" when negotiations between Unions and companies fail to yield an acceptable outcome for the workers. Strikes depend on all or a large majority of workers to participate; if only some workers choose to strike, they are unlikely to be able to force companies to give in and will likely lose their jobs.

The Committee

Committee Description

In May 2023, America's premier Screenwriters Union, the Writers Guild of America (WGA), declared a strike against the AMPTP. Following this, Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), composed of 170,000 media professionals, joined in the strike against AMPTP. Union members began holding demonstrations in Hollywood and throughout Los Angeles, and it has become big news across the nation and abroad.

These strikes were motivated by widespread dissatisfaction of film and television workers against AMPTP, especially regarding a lack of appropriate compensation from revenue made from streaming services, as well as the threat of Artificial intelligence to their job security. The Unions are demanding pay raises from the companies as well as protections against AI technology from threatening their job security.

This committee will operate as a full crisis committee. This means that, instead of passing long resolutions towards the end of the conference, we will pass multiple shorter “directives.” We will have frequent crisis updates to lay out what is happening in the world of the committee. These crisis updates will be influenced by a mix of the directives you pass, the crisis notes you write to staff, and staff ideas for new problems to solve. Crisis notes help tell your character's story and are used to build resources and accomplish secret goals. We will use a two-pad system, meaning that you will write your first note on legal pad 1, and while we respond to that note in the backroom, you can write your second note on legal pad 2. During the crisis update, we will return pad 1 for your third note and take pad 2 for responses. We encourage you to come up with fun, creative stories, or “arcs,” that you can bring to the committee. So, in preparation, think

about a secret end goal and how you think you can get there over the course of the conference.

The Rise of Streaming Services

In 2006, Google bought a little video streaming company that was plagued with trouble, from budgeting issues to rampant copyright infringement: YouTube. The wild popularity of a Saturday Night Live rap video, titled “Lazy Sunday” and posted in 2005, demonstrated the success of video sharing and streaming as potential business models. Netflix, a DVD subscription service, and Hulu, a joint venture between multiple companies, launched their movie and television streaming services in 2007 and 2008, respectively. After enjoying increasing popularity in the following decade, the use of streaming services exploded in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with Netflix alone gaining nearly 60 million subscribers from 2020 to 2023.

However, the main concern that striking actors had with streaming services had to do with residuals. These are payments that actors receive “when their work is re-used beyond its initial performance, such as when a movie or show is re-aired or re-released on DVD or basic cable,” in addition to the money they already made during the initial release. According to SAG-AFTRA, actors would receive very little in residuals from streaming platforms, with some revealing that they are making only a few cents off of popular movies and shows they feature in.

On top of all that, many shows being produced for streaming services “run for shorter seasons over longer periods of time,” meaning that there are fewer job opportunities available for both actors and writers. Though it may be a long-shot request, those working in the film industry would also like to have more work available for them, which will only be more expensive for production companies themselves.

Artificial Intelligence in the Film/TV Industry

AI, at this point in time, has been garnering an increasing amount of attention due to its rapid development and more widespread use. Specifically, one type of Artificial Intelligence, known as Large Language Models, or LLMs, was becoming more powerful and able to produce increasingly well-written text. This, of course, posed quite a threat to writers, who feared that AI would be used to flesh out unfinished scripts, or even write scripts from the ground up. If companies were to incorporate AI into the script writing process, writers could face job losses and increased difficulty in finding work.

On the SAG-AFTRA side of things, actors worry about AI being used to replicate their physical likeness and their voices, leading to similar job insecurities that writers would face. Film companies had not been very clear on how they planned to use AI, how actors would be compensated for its use, and whether or not actors' work would be used to train AI models.

Actors and writers fear that AI will be used to replace them. The situation is only worsened by companies' lack of transparency about how they intend to use Artificial Intelligence moving forward. On the other hand, AMPTP member companies are eager to use this technology to save themselves money, and because of the growing hype surrounding the technology.

Committee Scenario

You are a representative of a member company of the AMPTP, and this committee has been assembled to address these massive strikes by the two biggest unions in the industry. SAG-AFTRA has recently joined the strike, and it has become a

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front-page story across the world. As a representative of your company, you must prioritize not only the industry as a whole but the interests of your company, especially its profit margins. The strikes have already been hurting all member companies' profit margins, and it is imperative you find a resolution with the strikers while ensuring that your company's interests are still secured.

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Guiding Questions

Please consider the following questions as you prepare for this committee, allow the following to guide your research.

1. How can the industry best address the rise of artificial intelligence? Should it prioritize the benefits of AI or the well-being of the workers? Can a balance between the two be found?
2. How should pay be negotiated with the striking workers? Should they be compensated when their work is used to train AI? Should streaming residuals be increased, and if so, by how much?
3. How can companies balance creating jobs and raising minimum pay without straining their resources?
4. Making new movies and shows is a huge risk. If companies were to invest in more workers, how could they ensure that the new projects they create will pay off and turn a profit?
5. How does the type of company your character runs affect how they approach negotiations?

Characters

Content Disclaimer:

Due to the nature of the committee topic, delegates are prohibited from including the following in their crisis arcs, backroom notes, or directives:

The use of any form of violence or physical intimidation against strikers, whether by private or public security/law enforcement services

The purposeful orchestration of riots or the sabotage of Union activities.

The use of private security forces to coerce strikers or union members using violence or physical intimidation.

All content found in directives and crisis notes is subject to the approval and supervision of the Crisis Director.

Character List:

The following companies are all subsidiaries of the “Big Eight” members of the AMPTP. Consider researching not just your individual character’s life and views, but also the history and direction of the companies they are in charge of, plus that of their parent companies. This is especially helpful for characters who do not have much information about them available online.

Disney

1. Sean Bailey, President of Walt Disney Pictures

Ascending to the role in 2010, Bailey has used a “tent-pole” strategy of using strong, popular franchises to support the Disney brand. This strategy led to many live-action remakes of classic Disney films, which he calls “reimaginings.” He is also a founding investor in Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson’s tequila company.

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2. Steve Asbell, President of Production of 20th Century Studios, Inc.

Asbell has been working with 20th Century Studios for over two decades.

In the past, he has worked on The Wolverine, Logan, and Ford v Ferrari, and is especially looking to expand the studio's prominent sci-fi franchises, like Avatar and Predator.

3. Kevin Feige, President of Marvel Studios

The highest-grossing producer of all time, he is often credited as the mastermind behind the Marvel Cinematic Universe, encompassing numerous films and television series across a unified, carefully planned story. He wants to get production back on schedule as soon as possible and will be more lenient in negotiations to do so.

4. Kimberly Godwin, President of ABC News

First starting at CBS, Godwin worked her way up to executive vice president of News before leaving the company in 2021. She is working to transform the company culture, a move that some are deeming risky for viewership. As the President of a news company, she has sway over the reporting of the strike.

NBCUniversal

5. Peter Cramer, President of Universal City Studios LLC

Cramer has had successes both in continuing strong existing franchises and creating new live-action films. He has had nearly two decades of experience in film production and supervised the Pitch Perfect, Purge, and Jurassic World series, with Jurassic World being the highest-grossing film in the studio's history.

6. Cesar Conde, Chairman of NBCUniversal News Group

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Before coming to NBCUniversal, Conde was best known for catapulting the Spanish-language media company Univision to massive success. In his newest role, he oversaw heavy investment in streaming and technology, boasting high viewership. He is on a number of Boards of Directors for different companies, and is an avid tennis player.

Paramount

7. Brian Robbins, President and CEO of Paramount Pictures Corporation

Starting off as an actor, he held roles in a few television series alongside production roles in Coach Carter and Hardball. He previously worked as the President of Nickelodeon. While President of Paramount, he is noted for his decision to release Smile from streaming to theatrical, to great success.

8. David Stapf, President of CBS Studios Inc.

Stapf has been an integral part of CBS for over a decade, serving as President since 2004. He played a role in the rollout of NCIS, the world's #1 television franchise, and a massively influential police drama in pop culture. Stapf remains one of the few executives able to keep broadcast TV shows alive in the age of streaming.

9. Chris McCarthy, CEO of Showtime and MTV Entertainment Studios

McCarthy has worked a number of odd jobs, from manager of a Chick-fil-A to roles at pharmaceutical companies, leading up to his current role. He is passionate about reality TV and has been willing to re-negotiate contracts. Because he manages MTV and other cable networks, he is interested in keeping cable television a viable option for consumers.

10. Margie Cohn, President of DreamWorks Animation L.L.C.

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Cohn worked for 26 years at Nickelodeon on projects such as Avatar: The Last Airbender and SpongeBob SquarePants, and subsequently joined DreamWorks' animated television department. She helped secure many deals with streaming networks, increasing viewership, and is putting the studio on a two-films-per-year schedule.

Sony

11. Anthony "Tony" Vinciguerra, CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.

From humble beginnings, Tony got his start in the industry through various broadcasting corporations. In his role at Sony, he oversaw increased collaboration between other Sony subsidiaries, resulting in projects like video game adaptations. He hopes to speak directly with union leaders to come to a good resolution rather than taking hardline stances.

Netflix

12. Ted Sarandos, Co-CEO of Netflix, Inc.

Getting his start in a video store, Sarandos got connected to the film industry through SGA actor Ed Asner, and rose to lead the streaming giant Netflix. He heavily focuses on viewer interest and moving away from traditional business models, using computer algorithms to guide decisions on what films and shows to produce. Because of this, he wants to find ways to implement AI into the business and would prioritize the consumers above all.

Amazon

13. Jennifer "Jen" Salke, Head of Amazon Studios LLC

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Currently in the midst of a massive merger, Salke now oversees Amazon Studios as well as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's film and television divisions. She has experience in comedy and drama television, having worked on projects like *This Is Us*, *Modern Family*, and *The Good Place*. She needs to tread lightly to make sure Amazon and MGM make it through the strike and their own internal issues cleanly.

14. Michael Wright, President of MGM+

A former DreamWorks CEO, Wright is focused on navigating the recent Amazon and MGM merger. He came out on top of cable network Epix, recently rebranded to MGM+. In addition, MGM+ will have a streaming service of the same name to act as a sister service to Amazon Prime Video. Wright hopes to focus on expanding both the cable network and the streaming service.

15. Vernon Sanders, Head of Television at Amazon

Sanders arrived at Amazon in 2018 while the television department was still in its infancy, previously working for NBC. He worked hard to oversee original shows, such as *The Boys* and *The Rings of Power*, helping Amazon really make a name for itself in the television industry.

Apple

16. Jamie Erlicht, Co-head of Apple Studios LLC

Jamie previously served as President of Sony Pictures TV, where he played a role in the production of the widely famous *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*. Jamie has extensive executive experience in programming and is an expert in the field. He is a major advocate for the expansion of Apple TV+.

Warner Bros. Discovery

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17. Michael De Luca, Co-CEO of Warner Bros. Pictures

With over 40 years and several nominations and awards under his belt, De Luca is a production industry veteran. He is able to understand the sentiments of the striking writers, as he himself is a screenwriter. In particular, he enjoys creating horror films.

18. Channing Dungey, CEO of Warner Bros. Television

Dungey's career is steeped in collaboration, from assisting producers to get her start to helping build Shonda Rhimes' television portfolio. She has previously worked at ABC and Netflix, developing various drama television projects, and currently has partial ownership of Chicago Stars FC, a National Women's Soccer League team.

19. Michael Ouweleen, President of Cartoon Network

Michael started as a creative director in 1996, leading CN's show development, and later became CMO in 2014. He became President in 2022. He previously worked on Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law, as well as Birdgirl. His work at CN has focused on expanding CN and its sister channel's presence internationally.

20. Howard Lee, President of the Discovery Channel

Alongside his Presidency of the Discovery Channel, Howard is also the Chief Creative Officer of Warner Bros. His experience has been based largely within the administrative side of the industry, and he is a veteran player in this role.

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