

# #1574 Creative vs Control: Hollywood strikes for livable wages and the future of human creativity

[00:00:00]

## Intro 7-25-23

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** During today's episode, I'm going to be telling you about a show I think you should check out. It's the Black Guy Who Tips podcast. It's a comedy and culture show that doesn't take itself too seriously, if you couldn't tell. Keep an ear out mid show when I'll tell you more about it. And now, welcome to this episode of the award winning best of the left podcast, in which we shall take a look at the impact of the rise of streaming video services and the potential for AI written scripts on the future of show business and those trying to earn a living from it.

Sources today include The Majorda Report, More Perfect Union, On the Media, Vox, Steve Shives, CNBC, and Wisecrack, with additional members only clips from Recode Media and The Majorda Report.

## Writers Guild Strikes Back | Adam Conover - The Majority Report w/ Sam Seder Part 1 - Air Date 6-11-23

**ADAM CONOVER:** We're fighting for the survival of film and television writing as a career and a profession. The companies are trying to turn it into gig work. They're trying to turn us into freelancers who -- maybe you get a script a couple times a year, you make a couple thousand [00:01:00] bucks. Meanwhile, you have to go back to driving Uber or doing whatever odd job you do to make ends meet. That's what they're trying to push us towards in capital's never-ending quest to reduce how much their labor costs are. And they're doing it in different ways depending on what sector of the business you're talking about. They're pressuring television writers in a different way from film writers.

But the overall story is they're trying to eliminate this as a sustainable career, and we're not gonna let them, both for our own sakes and for the good of the

industry. This is an industry that thrived and creates the most valuable media property in the world, partially because it attracts the best writers and talent in the world, because for a century, this has been the one place that talent could actually get paid. You can't really get paid in journalism. You can't really get paid in novels. But you can get paid in Hollywood. And that's what they're trying to end, and we're not gonna let them do that.

And so we're out there every day withholding our labor until they remember that we are the people who make the product and they actually [00:02:00] need us, and they don't have anything without us.

They've forgotten that. We're out there reminding them. And as soon as they figure it out, they're gonna come back to the table and make a deal with us.

## **Why Actors Are Striking For The First Time In 40 Years - More Perfect Union - Air Date 6-23-23**

**BRENDAN SCANNELL:** It's like a weird dichotomy of both feeling really successful and really gratified, and then also wondering if you'll have health insurance two months from now.

**ANDREW LEEDS:** I am an actor and a writer. I've been on such shows as *Barry*, *The Patient*, stuff like that. I think what we've all seen is the shift to streaming. And unfortunately, our contracts were not negotiated for streaming, they were negotiated for network television. So in some instances, we don't have protections on streaming in the way that we have protections on network television. And so what you have are situations that now occur where we're not being compensated fairly. And so a [00:03:00] residual is something when the show re-airs somewhere or it gets sold to another outlet, we get a check. Sometimes those checks are pretty good and maybe you get a thousand dollars one day in the mail that you weren't expecting. Sometimes those checks are literally 1 cent.

**BRENDAN SCANNELL:** Biggest thing I was in, I was on a show on Netflix called *Bonding*. My show was originally like an independent series, and then Netflix bought it and put it on their platform, which was amazing, and more people saw it than I ever anticipated, like millions and millions of people.

The way the contracts were set up, because the budget was so low, was that there was no residuals involved in it.

**INTERVIEWER:** It sounds like you made nothing, like nothing in residuals, like you didn't make a dime in residuals?

**BRENDAN SCANNELL:** I didn't make a single dollar in residuals for that show.

As residuals are going down and as these shows are being pulled off platforms or not aired, actors aren't [00:04:00] receiving any residuals from them, which leads them to not be able to often make their health insurance.

**ANDREW LEEDS:** So health insurance is obviously a difficult thing when you're in a business where your income is completely unpredictable.

**RENÉE FELICE SMITH:** I was a series regular on *NCIS-Los Angeles*. I played Nell Jones for 11 network television seasons. So, yeah, I've done a lot of TV. And in December of 2022, I received a letter from SAG letting me know that I no longer qualified for health insurance. What was the work for? You know, my labor lines the pockets of these executives. And to what benefit in return, right? Okay, they're still profiting off of my performance and I can't even go to a GP if I have a sore throat. That's not okay.

**THOMAS OCHOA:** I think the perception [00:05:00] is that performers who work at a professional level are all successful. I think that has to do with how our industry is glamorized and romanticized in the media. And I've been lucky to work a lot across different mediums. But I have a full-time job as a flight attendant because that's less stressful than worrying year after year about making my minimum health insurance qualification, minimums for union health insurance.

**BRENDAN SCANNELL:** Me, I have another full-time job. I'm a writer. So I couldn't be an actor. I couldn't continue to be an actor and pay for my life in LA and have health insurance if I wasn't also in the WGA. I sometimes say that writing supports my acting hobby.

**RENÉE FELICE SMITH:** I was very fortunate to land the job that I got right out of school. It's not the norm. I'm aware of that. I'm aware of [00:06:00] my privilege and I'm very grateful for the opportunity that I've had. But it's not the norm. You know, I have a friend who is an incredible actor, was cast on a Marvel Disney Plus show as a prominent actor's mom, and she made \$500 from

her time on that show. That is just not sustainable. You cannot sustain life on \$500.

**ANDREW LEEDS:** All we're asking for is for the ability -- not even to get rich -- it's for the ability to be able to do our jobs.

**RENÉE FELICE SMITH:** We should be able to afford to live a life in the city where the work is taking place.

**ANDREW LEEDS:** Let's just take care of this now. Like hey, you know what? If we make a show that costs 10 million on network, we're gonna pay you the same money as if we make a show that costs 10 million on a streamer. If I'm a waiter and I work at a really nice restaurant and I'm a waiter and I work at a not as nice restaurant, the minimum is still the same. [00:07:00] It's still the same.

We can't be going into every job literally not knowing how much money we're gonna make. We have to take away the ability from the AMPTP and from the studios, of backing us into a corner and making us accept deals that are A, not fair, but B, against the spirit of what's already been negotiated.

**RENÉE FELICE SMITH:** This negotiation is consequential. If we do not get what we're asking for, there is just going to be continued erosion -- the erosion of compensation residuals. The existential threat of AI, which is so real, right? We're right there.

**BRENDAN SCANNELL:** And what I want for all actors is a sense that our union is fighting for us in a way that will keep us here, and that will continue to protect us in a really long-term thinking type of way.

**THOMAS OCHOA:** We have to get comfortable advocating for ourselves, our benefits, our access to pensions, our [00:08:00] minimums. Everything is degrading. It's not keeping up with inflation. And if we don't take a stand, there's no way the life of a working stable performer is going to be a viable lifestyle anymore. We're gonna lose it if we don't fight for it.

## **Why the Supreme Court Broke Up Hollywood's Studio System - On the Media - Air Date 7-5-23**

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** The government sued the studios in 1938, and the case eventually went to the Supreme Court. The court sided with the government. And in 1948, we got the Paramount Decrees, which basically forced the studios to stop block booking and sell off their movie theaters, or at least separate them into a different part of their business. How else did the so-called Paramount Decrees change Hollywood?

**PETER LABUZA:** Well, the big thing that they said is you can no longer sell these movie packages. Each film had to be sold one by one to different movie theaters. But that's what really, really changed. Each film now has to compete on the open market, and this wildly changes the types of films that were being made. The [00:09:00] studios really start to focus on the blockbuster. These are films like The Ten Commandments.

**TEN COMMANDMENTS:** You are not worthy to receive these Ten Commandments.

**PETER LABUZA:** Ben-Hur.

**BEN-HUR:** You. I said, no order for him.

**PETER LABUZA:** The Sound of Music.

[CLIP OF "DO-RE-MI" FROM THE SOUND OF MUSIC]

But then you have all these independent filmmakers who are making sort of interesting social dramas. You have the rise of actors like Sidney Poitier, and then when you get to the sixties, you get the sort of new Hollywood. These are films like Bonnie and Clyde.

**BONNIE & CLYDE:** This here's Miss Bonnie Parker, Clyde Barrow. We rob Banks,.

The Godfather.

**THE GODFATHER:** I want to make you an offer you can't refuse

**PETER LABUZA:** Easy Rider.

**EASY RIDER:** You got a helmet? Oh, I've got a helmet. I got a beauty.

**PETER LABUZA:** Really what you see is a sort of new niches of audiences appear. It's not everyone going to one type of film. It's audiences being able to find their own type of films and go to different type of theaters. You get arthouse theaters that will [00:10:00] be showing foreign films from Italy, in France and Sweden.

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** So breaking up the big companies had massive creative consequences that basically created what we think of as like modern cinema culture.

**PETER LABUZA:** Exactly. The studios had been largely conservative in even making those blockbusters. Right. Those are conservative types of films that aren't meant to be stylistically unique, that are just meant to appeal to every type of sensibility. And then you get these people like your Martin Scorsese and even the early films of Steven Spielberg that are kind of made more independently and made with a lot more artistic daring that really pushes what types of movies audiences might be interested in watching.

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Obviously, the big Hollywood companies were still around, but they focused on making fewer movies a year, bigger blockbusters, rather than just kind of flooding the market with junk.

**PETER LABUZA:** They didn't need those B-movies, right? There were independents [00:11:00] who would make those for them. They could focus on a few blockbusters and then they would make these deals with these independent filmmakers. Right? They would want to attract someone like John Frankenheimer, who made *The Manchurian Candidate* and be like, We want you to make a film. Here's the check, and we will distribute it. And we're not going to control all that process because we trust you more than we trust ourselves to kind of work in this new type of financial environment.

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** And by the 1980s, the picture of this post-Paramount Decree landscape was as clear as ever. But the law and how antitrust was enforced changed quite a bit under President Ronald Reagan. What happened?

**PETER LABUZA:** You know, if you've covered antitrust on the show before, this name, Robert Bork, has possibly come up. He was this legal scholar in conservative movements who developed this idea of the consumer welfare standard, which said, when we think about competition and markets, we should focus on what the consumer pays at the [00:12:00] end of the day. Which really

helped change a lot of thinking in both conservative and liberal antitrust scholarship. You know, let markets regulate themselves. And giant companies are totally okay and good. The studios back in the sixties and seventies had already started to become part of these larger conglomerates. So, you know, Paramount was bought by an oil company called Gulf and Western in 1967. Warner Brothers became a bigger company called Warner Communication. And then, of course, Columbia Pictures, which now is technically under Sony, was bought by the Coca-Cola Company. So what really starts to happen in the eighties is the Paramount Decrees still exist. They're on the books, but there's a lot of exceptions being allowed.

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** I want to jump forward to 2020 when the Department of Justice, under President Donald Trump, requested to end the decrees, which was approved by U.S. District Court Judge Analisa [00:13:00] Torres. What was her rationale for ending this legal framework that dictated 70 years of Hollywood?

**PETER LABUZA:** Basically, there was a huge review within the Department of Justice under Jeff Sessions at the time to look at what are called horse and buggy decrees. Right. These consent decrees from 60, 70, 80 years ago that might not be helping companies at all. Now, there's a few reasons that I think she was justified in doing this. One, certain major companies like Disney were never beholden to the decrees. Right. Disney was an independent distributor at the time. So what is the point of these consent decrees that apply to slightly smaller companies like Paramount but don't apply to Disney? And I think the most important thing she said is if this is something that will help these big companies compete with streamers, companies like Netflix and Amazon, then maybe giving them the option to possibly purchase theaters [00:14:00] could be beneficial in the end. Now, none of the major companies have made a decision to invest or buy these theaters. Disney owns like two movie theaters – Netflix owns two. We'll kind of see the effects that might pop up in the next few years. But really, the new market concentration is in how the studios are looking at streaming.

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Does Disney need to get into the movie theater business? Does Netflix need to get into the movie theater business? They already have ways of distributing their films. The audience is already there. Of course, these companies also make movies. I mean, Netflix, Amazon, Disney Prime and HBO Max. Aren't they kind of running afoul of that same production and distribution framework?



**PETER LABUZA:** I think that's where people who look at antitrust in the movie industry today look at the problems of streaming and see it kind of recreating those frameworks. And I think if you look at the independent producers [00:15:00] of today, you kind of see parallels with the frustrations that the independent producers of yesterday had to have. I think a good example would be like the Daniels, right, who wrote and directed Everything, Everywhere, All At Once.

**MICAH LOEWINGER - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Nominated for Academy Awards.

**PETER LABUZA:** A lot of Academy Awards. Made a lot of money at the U.S. box office, mostly through word of mouth, started in a few theaters and grew and grew. They now have a deal with one of the major studios. You can make a film and make it into a word of mouth hit, but it's so much harder when streaming has become the dominant environment and the economics of streaming are so different, right where you get paid all the money upfront as opposed to sort of getting a small share of the profits down the road. So you kind of have to just sign away a first look deal, which really frustrates a lot of talent.

## How streaming caused the TV writers strike - Vox - Air Date 6-7-23

**WARREN LEIGHT:** What's the difference between a network show and a streaming show? Network is the tv. We all grew up with a BBC n b CCBs, and it's the season that begins in September and runs 22 [00:16:00] episodes and ends in in May, as that's a, a season, uh, especially for procedurals that everyone knows, like Grey's Anatomy or, or csis.

TV seasons always been began in September, and that had something to do with auto sales. By the way, the new car seasons came out and they were gonna advertise heavily, so you wanted new tv.

**ERICA SALEH:** The network model worked for a very long time and gave people a stable career.

**WARREN LEIGHT:** I broke in on long order criminal intent.

I was on. Staff there four years became showrunner there. So you get paid by the episode or by the week they said, you'll, you'll make \$15,000. And I thought



that was it. I didn't know they meant for every episode. I, I didn't understand what I'd stumbled into, so I was able to make a living, start raising a family in New York.

I think those doors have closed now. So the upside of streaming creatively was you didn't have to worry about commercial breaks. If I write an svu, we have five commercial breaks in an hour of tv. Something has to happen at the end of. That act to make sure people come [00:17:00] back. Your writing has to conform to the advertising that pays for it.

If you write for streaming, you don't have to worry about commercial breaks. You get to write a different structure. Maybe it's just an organic three act structure to an hour. Now you're down to eight episode runs, six episode runs, shorter seasons where you could arc a story across eight episodes. You can go a little darker, you can go a little deeper.

That part of it was great and writers from movies flat to it and novels flat to it.

**JULIA YORKS:** But as the episode orders have shrunk, what used to be 40 weeks out of the year that you were working is now 20 weeks. So try having to go from finding one job a year to finding multiple jobs a year to maintain the same status quo that you previously had.

It's tough.

**ERICA SALEH:** I don't think anyone's asking to go back to 20 episode seasons, but the stability and the longevity of those jobs is the model that we're asking for and that we think is best for writers and best for the product.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you explain what's changed?

How the writer's room looks different in each model?

**ERICA SALEH:** The [00:18:00] function of the writer's room is the exact same, like it is a group of writers coming together to break story, to craft a season and to write. Episodes of television when you get your first job writing on a TV show, you're almost always a staff writer, um, which is the lowest level in the room. And then the next strung on the ladder is story editor, from story editor to executive story editor, co-producer, producer, supervising producer, co-executive producer, and then executive producer is the highest in showrunner.

**WARREN LEIGHT:** Obviously the creative process is people coming together having a conversation. About, is it a dark comedy? Is it one hour? Is it a half hour?

**ERICA SALEH:** Breaking story and really writing your whole season. The next phase is production. When you bring all of your crew together, bring all of your actors, grab your directors, and you shoot the TV show.

And then the final stage is [00:19:00] post-production. When you take that thing you shot, you sit with your editor, turn it into what people see on tv.

**JULIA YORKS:** Broadcast shows, kind of used to be. The entire TV space. So if you are on a show like Law Order svu, or if you are on a show like Friends, your show was being filmed.

It was in production concurrently while you were in the writer's room.

**ERICA SALEH:** Writers are going back and forth and really learning the ropes of what it is to produce a TV show. You know, and it might be in the moment when you're watching us. Scene and an actor might come up to you and say like, this line just isn't working for me.

The job of the writer at that moment is to talk to the actor, figure out what isn't working, and write them a new line.

**WARREN LEIGHT:** The writer is working with the actor at all times. He's conjuring the character. He's meeting the actor that was cast and should be there when that actor is giving life to those words.

**ERICA SALEH:** Financially, of course, it would cost studios to keep [00:20:00] writers on and to pay those extra weeks to keep doing their job.

It seems like their favorite place to cut the budget is with writers, robbing them of creativity, then robbing them of people training up to be the the showrunners of future shows.

**WARREN LEIGHT:** Writers are now being separated from production, employed for fewer weeks.

**JULIA YORKS:** Fewer weeks means. Less income. And when a show like Game of Thrones costs so much money and takes so much time to, to make, that's a longer period of time between seasons.

And so that means these writers have a longer period of time before they are employed again.

**ERICA SALEH:** Story-wise, there is something. Nice about having all of your episodes written before you start to produce. It really gives you a nice scope of the season. You know where at all your locations are gonna be, and if something happens in the last episode of your season that you realize there's a nice way to plant early in the season, you can go and [00:21:00] play with that episode.

On the other hand, not having your writers continue to be there and do the work that happens in production hurts the production, and it hurts the writers.

## **Why Are Studio Executives Like This? - Steve Shives - Air Date 7-17-23**

**STEVE SHIVES - HOST, STEVE SHIVES:** Why are you like this? I don't claim to know why the Bob Igers of the world are the way they are. I don't know their hearts. I don't know what goes on in their minds. Their experience in the world is so warped by wealth and privilege that it would probably be unfathomable to me. But I do know a few things, and I have guesses about a few others.

I know that to them, the emphasis in the "entertainment business" goes on the business, and that's fair enough, all things being equal. It is a business. People pay for movie tickets. People pay for DVDs and Blu-rays. People pay for streaming services. Advertisers pay for commercial time. The American movie and TV business generates billions and billions of dollars in [00:22:00] revenue every year. Viewing it as a business isn't a problem. The problem is how the bosses in that business view the people who make the products that generate all that revenue. Because when I say "product" in this context, I just mean the end result of a production. A movie is a product because it was produced by somebody. A lot of somebodies: writers, directors, actors, crew, even producers, go figure.

But when a studio boss talks about the movies and TV shows their company produces in terms of product -- and I don't know this for a fact, I can't read their minds, this is just an educated guess based on how the Bobs of the world talk and act regarding the products of their business -- when they talk in terms of product, they mean the thing they're selling, and it might be a movie or a TV show, but it might just as well be a TV set or a pair of shoes or a chicken

sandwich. They don't think in [00:23:00] creative terms. They don't see the world that way. And they aren't curious about people who do. They just want their money. And selling a movie or a TV series is no different to them than selling any other product. It's all about convincing the consumer that they need it, that they'll be missing out if they don't pay to see it.

The idea that people actually care about the product itself is alien to them. The idea that the artists who make those products would actually be invested in their work and expect to be fairly compensated for that work, not just because their labor has value and generates revenue, and they should have the right to share in that revenue, but because the work itself has meaning to them. That idea never seems to occur to studio bosses. Why would the girl working in the kitchen at Popeye's feel any emotional attachment to the chicken sandwich she just made?

They don't understand pride [00:24:00] in work, pride in craft, because most of them don't work and don't care about craft. They don't even really care about the product. They only care about the money the product brings their way.

And it's not just the writers and actors and other artists who the studio bosses don't understand. It's the audience too. It's you and me. They don't understand why a writer or an actor would care about the work they do, and they don't understand why we would care about it either. Like I said, it's all advertising to them. We are consumers. We're supposed to go see movies, not because we are looking for stories and characters to invest in, but because we've seen them being promoted and, hey, that looks like the next big thing; I'd better watch that so I don't miss out.

They don't even want movie stars anymore. And they think we don't want them either. They'd replace every movie star with a [00:25:00] CGI replica tomorrow if they could get away with it. And when the box office grosses tanked even lower than during COVID, they'd all scratch their heads and wonder why? Why does it matter? Because art doesn't exist for them, not really. Just product. A movie is something you sell tickets to. It doesn't mean anything. A painting is something you buy or sell or hang on your wall to impress people. It doesn't really mean anything.

Years ago, I saw an interview on YouTube with Leonard Goldberg, who was a legendary Hollywood producer and executive. He was president of 20th Century Fox for a couple of years in the 1980s. He was one of the good ones, relatively speaking. I offer him as an exception that proves the rule. In the 1960s, Leonard Goldberg was an executive at the ABC Television Network, and one of the shows that aired on ABC during his tenure [00:26:00] was *The*

*Fugitive*, which was ending its four-year run in 1967. And well, I'll let Leonard Goldberg tell you.

**LEONARD GOLDBERG:** I went to the president of the network and I said to him, we can't just end the series with another episode. We have to resolve the series. And he and the other senior members of management looked at me like I was crazy. He said, "What are you talking about? You mean the people actually...?" I said, "Yeah, they watch, and they care. They actually believe, even though they know it's fiction, they're into that character and his story."

**STEVE SHIVES - HOST, STEVE SHIVES:** I think about the interview all the time. And I've thought about it a lot these last few months as the writers have been on strike, and now the actors. That's really the heart of this conflict. Because what was true in 1967 is still true today. The people in charge of the entertainment industry, for the most part, have no comprehension of what [00:27:00] that industry produces other than as product to be marketed and sold to consumers.

## How AI Took Center Stage In The Hollywood Writers' Strike -CNBC - Air Date 6-30-23

**KATE SAMMER:** The last WGA strike in 2007 lasted a hundred days. It cost, California's economy, approximately 2.1 billion in revenue.

**JUSTINE BATEMAN:** When I was on the Negotiating Committee of Screen Actors Guild around '07, '08, we were trying to get residuals for made for new media. That's what streaming was called then. The studio said, well, it's so new. We don't know if we're even gonna make money on the internet. I mean, it's so untried. So unproven. And I said to the rest of the committee, we better get some real estate in here because this is just another way to distribute things.

**KATE SAMMER:** After 14 months on the picket line, WGA writers ratified a deal that granted the union jurisdiction over new media, and codified a system for creators to receive royalty payments from streamed content. The hard-fought win laid a foundation for residual compensation before streaming took over as a leader in content [00:28:00] distribution.

Widespread consumer adoption of streaming has made it the new standard for entertainment. But businesses operating in the space are struggling to achieve profitability.

**DAN RAYBURN:** Today the only one we know of that is cashflow positive is Netflix. They've estimated there'll be about 3.5 billion of free cash flow this year. Every other company out there, if you think about it, are losing money. Disney, Warner Bro's. Discovery, losing billions and billions and billions of dollars a year. And then you also have to scale this. It's not enough to have a couple million subscribers. It took Netflix getting to about 200 million subscribers before they got cashflow positive. The platforms are trying to figure out what works best from their bottom line.

**KATE SAMMER:** In the face of weak revenues, streaming companies have been issuing layoffs, bundling services, and removing content from their platforms. While content removal helps curtail balance sheet losses, the action cuts off content creators from receiving residual profits, often without any formal notification.

**DAN RAYBURN:** Streaming platforms that are [00:29:00] creating their own content and their own original are constantly changing the way they license content. They've jumped from service to service to service in new licensing deals. Some of those deals are one year long, some of them are multi-years. Every time a content deal is done with a streaming platform or distribution, it has a direct impact on those that created the content: distributors, producers, writers, actors, because they're getting royalties based on that. So they don't like that some content is being removed from streaming platforms because now they're not getting compensated for that anymore.

**KATE SAMMER:** The advent of streaming has granted audiences unprecedented access to massive libraries of on-demand content, a modern luxury that could dampen how viewers feel the effects of a strike.

**JUSTINE BATEMAN:** Last time the Writers Guild struck was in 2007-2008, and everybody really felt it. The audience felt it, the studios felt it, because if there wasn't new material being made, there was nothing. There was no streaming. There was broadcast television, there was cable [00:30:00] television and there were movies.

Now there's a strike and there are streaming sites where you can watch an almost unlimited amount of material while we're on strike. So just in that way,

you can see how striking now has possibly less impact than when we struck in '07 and '08.

**KATE SAMMER:** With content generation imperative to the success of both writers and studios, the advent of AI has thrown an unforeseen wrench into contract negotiations. Rather than an outright ban, the WGA has proposed guardrails for AI technology that aim to protect the working standards, payment systems, and authorship credit for writers. As for the studios, their statement on AI acknowledges ambiguity around the emerging technology and proposes annual discussions before landing on an official regulatory agreement. The alliance's unwillingness to outline strict policies around generative AI tools [00:31:00] has led to a stalemate.

As the W G A takes to the picket line, other entertainment unions have begun their own contract negotiations with the Alliance. The Director's Guild of America struck a contract agreement with the studios. On the topic of AI, both parties agreed that AI is not a person and that generative AI cannot replace the duties performed by members.

Alliance negotiations with the Screen Actors Guild are underway, with the existing contract set to expire June 30th, 2023. Ahead of contract negotiations with the Alliance, the Screen Actors Guild voted in favor of a strike, a proactive step in hopes of bringing more leverage to the bargaining table.

They maintain that using AI to replicate an actor's voice or likeness requires the performers consent and compensation.

**CALEB WARD:** Really, I think the place that we are going to as a society is "prompt to entertainment." Literally being able to type in, "I want to see an action movie [00:32:00] and I want it to be funny and I want it to take place in Texas. Go." And it spits out a movie.

**KATE SAMMER:** This is Caleb Ward. He's the founder of Curious Refuge, a production hub and learning portal for AI filmmakers. Curious Refuge's viral videos have given millions of viewers a brief glimpse of what an AI film future may look like.

AI generates content through a digestive process. The model takes in preexisting content, both copyright-protected and public domain. From this, it produces an amalgamation of information. The output looks new, but comes from existing media and sources.



**CALEB WARD:** These tools are now teaching themselves based on those iterations and generating its own reference points. Now we're seeing works that you would never know what the inspiration source was. And it seemingly is something that's coming from thin air, but it's being pulled from a million different resources and not just one. Writers will be able to show what the final [00:33:00] product will look like in the writer's room. That has never been possible before.

And so I think writers now are gonna have more power than ever before to direct these creative projects.

**KATE SAMMER:** AI enthusiasts like Caleb see the technology as an equalizer that enables individuals with no experience in the entertainment industry to produce cinematic worlds.

**CALEB WARD:** Creative tools like this have always evolved how we tell stories, and I think that this is just a time of transition for us, and so we're all gonna learn how to use these tools soon.

**JUSTINE BATEMAN:** I think the idea that AI would democratize entertainment is absolutely ridiculous. What that's really saying is that the unskilled and the untalented would be able to pretend that they're skilled and talented.

## **Writers Guild Strikes Back | Adam Conover Part 2- The Majority Report w/ Sam Seder - Air Date 6-11-23**

**ADAM CONOVER:** We have an AI proposal that we are demanding that they address. They refuse to address it. And we're doing it for a simple reason: we are not gonna let them use AI to undermine our wages and working conditions.

Everything you said, by the way, is [00:34:00] completely correct. Let's be really specific about what we're talking about, because AI is a marketing term that's designed to make you think that this software can do anything and everything, right? A year and a half ago, we just called it algorithms, we called it code, right? But now they've come up with a marketing term called AI and there's a lot of hype and a lot of real technology all under that.

So what are we talking about specifically? We're talking about large language model, generative models. These do something very specific. You load a lot of text into them; they output text on the other side that looks like the input text, scrambles it up enough that it looks different. And it is very good at making coherent text that reads as grammatically sound and meaningful in the English language. But that's all it does. That's literally all it does, is it's a word blender, or I like folks who call it a word calculator. You can ask it to do interesting things with words.

That is not what a writer does. A writer does not simply output text that resembles text that came before. A writer, first of all, we could wax on poetically about the [00:35:00] creative spark and all that sort of thing, and coming up with new ideas and drawing from your own experience and putting it on the page. All that stuff is real, but it's a little woowoo, right? So let's forget about that.

It's also not literally what a writer does in film and television, which is the most intensely collaborative creative product on earth. A writer doesn't just output the text. The writer takes a call from the studio head and makes notes or takes their notes. The writer goes and talks to the director and makes sure the script fits their vision. The writer talks to the actor and makes sure the actor likes the lines. The writer goes to set and observes what's going on and says, ah, actually, If we do it like that, the joke's not gonna land because the joke relies on x, y, z. This happening on this other scene, we need to make sure a, b, c .You've done this work, right?

The writer works with the line producer who says, hold on a second, this script is a little bit too expensive. Can we economize on locations? It's all of this really detailed, person, human-to-human work and detailed subject-specific knowledge that if [00:36:00] you were to try to put that into an algorithm, you'd literally have to invent Data from Star Trek.

And "maybe it's going so fast and we're gonna get there one day!" I'll believe it when I fucking see it, Sam.

Right now they've invented an algorithm where you put text in one end, you get text out the other end, and it's extremely computationally expensive, and that's all it can do. So that's the reality of the situation.

However, the CEOs are stupid enough to not understand how the software works, and they also don't understand what a writer does. I'm sure you've had plenty of bosses over your life. You know that your boss doesn't actually

understand what you do. So I believe that Ted and David and all those guys, they believe that all writers do is output text. And they have been told by the hype maniacs who are telling them about generative AI that, oh, we can use this to reduce your labor costs, because the technology is going so fast, and it'll be AI media, blah, blah, blah. I know that they've drank the Kool-Aid and [00:37:00] so we know that they intend to use this very limited technology to try to undermine our working conditions.

And so an example of what they might do, if we don't stop them, is they might say, Hey, an AI wrote a great script. Oh, the script is so good. We love it. Now we just need you to go talk to the director. Go talk to the actor, go to set, make sure it's all within budget. Go to post, take all of our notes. I'm gonna call you at 2:00 AM and yell at you cuz I don't like it and I want you to make changes. Oh, but you didn't write the script, the AI wrote it. You're just the freelancer we hired to punch it up. That is what we are worried about. We're not gonna be hired to babysit an algorithm and to do all of our work, all the same work we do today, but being paid less because they've decided a computer does it. We're not gonna allow that to happen.

## **Hollywood On Strike: Who Cares? - Wisecrack - Air Date 6-2-23**

**HOST, WISECRACK:** Throughout America's labor history, key groups agitated for one big union, which is exactly what it sounds like. One entire working class [00:38:00] union harnessing all the collective power of laborers in every industry.

This movement really began with the Knights of Labor, which started as a secret society in 1869 based around the conceit that an injury to one is the concern of all. In accordance, they let most workers, except women and Chinese immigrants join, though they also consigned black workers to segregated assemblies.

The Knights wanted to return to a pre-industrial America arguing that corporate growth through the power balance between worker and employer out of whack. According to Loomis, the organization believed. That through reform, it could recreate the democratic smallholder republic of pre-Civil War America.

But the very thing that gave the Knights of Labor power, their vastness also made cohesion difficult. And there was plenty of infighting and factionalism. Then losing several strikes for eight hour work days, coupled with the fallout

from the famous Haymarket riots where someone threw a bomb at a group of police officers.

The Knights of Labor basically got knocked out of existence and [00:39:00] its place be far more conservative. American Federation of Labor, the AFL flourished, they had a very different philosophy only opening its ranks to white skilled laborers. But in 1905, the international workers of the world, i e, the I W W A K A, the wobblies arrived on the scene.

Aiming to bring all workers together in solidarity, which according to Loomis frightened employers, government, and the AFL who all wanted to crush the organization, their propaganda savvy approach to promoting one big union for all oppressed workers brought hope to thousands for the first time, while many of its most outspoken members used violent rhetoric.

Loomis notes that the Wobblies offered workers practical advice to avoid violence in workplace actions and believed general strikes i e strikes across all industries rather than worker violence would trigger the revolution. Its famous bread and roses strike, and which workers demanded not only enough money for necessities like bread, but for luxuries like freshly cut [00:40:00] flowers.

Saw the wobbly shut down the center of the New England textile industry. Lawrence, Massachusetts Mill owners and police responded violently and armed Militias descended on the town. After mothers and children aligned with the cause were beaten by officers. A congressional committee was called, Workers testified about their struggles, and the American Woolen Company eventually succumbed to public scrutiny, but the Lawrence Union dissolved in a mere two years.

See, the wobbly shared some problems with the Knights of Labor in its disorganization tendency to move from cause to cause across state lines with little consistent organizing as well as its infighting. I factionalization, but the Fatal Blow was the government and various militias, violent crackdown on the wobbly.

Which included harassing, beating, arresting, and imprisoning workers on trumped up charges, tarring and feathering, and straight up. Murdering members. At one point Copper Mining Company, Phelps Dodge, assembled a private militia to stop a minor strike. The militia kidnapped [00:41:00] over 1000 suspected radicals, forced them into cattle cars, knee-deep and manure, and dropped them off in the middle of a desert, and what's now known as the Bisbee deportation.

There's two things I hate. It's being covered in. And the desert. I hate both of those things. Mix those together. It's just like the smoothie from hell. The violence that the wobbly sustained eventually crushed the organization and their dreams of revolution. Now, later in 1919, the AFL resoundingly rejected a wobbly inspired proposition.

For one big union and a nationwide general strike and made any unauthorized strike punishable by expulsion from the federation. Since then, courts corporate interest and politicians have made the kind of union power, the wobblies imagined impossible, using tactics ranging from news, newspaper propaganda to private police forces to spy, to intimidation, to violence, to the Taft Harley Bill that defended unions by outlawing important tactics like solidarity strikes.

The seventies and eighties were the death blow for Union [00:42:00] Vitality in America as de-industrialization decimated factory jobs that were union strongholds. Reagan inaugurated a new era of union busting when he destroyed the Air Traffic Control Union patco by firing over 11,000 striking workers. And what Luma says marked the beginning of the modern corporate war on organized labor.

It gave private employers confidence they could treat their workers like Reagan had treated the air traffic controllers. And the government would not intervene. Wow. I didn't know that about Reagan. And that's horrible cuz the whole wisecrack team just got matching. Ronald Reagan tattoos when minors in Arizona went on strike in 1983, the state and our old friends Phelps Dodge conspired to start an undercover private police force.

Specifically to destroy the union. These efforts culminated with 425 state troopers and 325 National Guard members with helicopters and military tanks chasing away the striking minors. The workers subsequently voted against unionization. Now, importantly, what little remained of the [00:43:00] American labor movement was increasingly constrained by policy decisions.

There's fragmented American unions along both sectorial and geographic lines, according to scholar Alexander Hertel Fernand Amandi, who notes that that fragmentation has weakened labor's capacity to shape national politics. We see the effects of fragmentation in Hollywood today, where, for example, animation writers are not represented by the W G A but by a separate animation union. This lessens the power of the WGA to halt all production despite the animation guilds support for the strike. Additionally, each Hollywood Union negotiates new contracts at different times, lessening the likelihood of multiple unions striking at once. That's part of why this particular WGA strike is so important.

Negotiations loom for the Director's Guild, screen Actors' Guild and the Teamsters who represent drivers casting directors, location managers and other Hollywood workers. Meaning there's a rare moment for real solidarity across the various Hollywood factions. And at the time of recording this video, [00:44:00] members of SAG are currently voting on whether or not to strike, but we still haven't answered the question of why we should care so much about this particular strike, which representing mostly college educated writers based in major cities.

Differs from the popular conception of what the blue collar union worker looks like. Well, let's take the 2007, 2008 writer strike for an example. At the time, writers faced an existential crisis, the arrival of new media platforms and the subsequent gutting of writer compensation. After a hundred days of agitation, writers were able to secure an admittedly low balled residual model that the Director's Guild and the Screen Actors' Guild later copied.

And in the process, they created a new framework for how we should think about creative ownership and the digital age. Now, while the strike may have denied you some episodes of the office, it improved conditions for workers across Hollywood, but another reason we should all care as if this strike carries implications that go far beyond hollywood. Writers are confronting new threats to their work threats that [00:45:00] workers across so many industries face. Like the perils of what happens when a real job becomes gig work and the loss of worker protection that comes with that change. Or the way AI that's been trained on human creativity and output could be used to replace, or at the very least, grossly devalue workers across industries or the way wages are across the board, failing to keep up with inflation and cost of living. Now, the rising tides of the Hollywood writers may not be able to lift all boats, but it can bring major existential issues surrounding contemporary labor to the forefront. And there are few jobs, at least in America, that aren't being affected by either ification, AI technology, or stagnant wages. So the precedent set here could eventually affect all of us.

The story of the American labor movement is speckled with tragedy, lost causes, and government and corporate repression. But it's also a fundamentally hopeful one. We've come a long way from working 18 hours in dirty factories, and that's because of the bravery and fortitude of [00:46:00] millions of American workers.

We're in a new era where despite decades of repression, organized labor seems to be making a comeback across industries and succeeding even against multinational behemoths like Starbucks and Amazon, we may never be able to

realize the Wobblies dream of one big union. But at the very least, we should support all workers fighting for dignified and sustainable labor conditions, no matter the color of their collar.

## Meet the AI company that wants to remake Hollywood -Recode Media with Peter Kafka - Air Date 6-14-23

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** The reason I actually started Runway I saw research on 2014, 2015, and really realized that what was happening, I don't know, in self-driving cars and other like spaces was not really being paid attention to in the creative world. And so spent time building that, building the research, building the models. Per 2018, things were very early. And so pitching to investors, " hey, this is the thing that you'll be using to generate everything, every piece of content, media, video, images that you'll see and watch," was really hard because the outputs were not really there.

I think over the last, I would say, eight months or so, things have gotten really good and it's easier for people to realize that. [00:47:00]

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** So you guys offer a suite of software tools? Again, some of them are in the market today. People like *Everywhere All At Once* have used them. *The Colbert Show* uses them to build out graphics. You've got something new out called Gen-2, which allows you to do text-to-video. This is the dream/nightmare a lot of people have about what AI is going to be able to do. In this case, the pitch is: type something in plain English and we'll make, we'll generate a little movie for you.

I wanna talk about Gen-2 in a bit, but the existing products, the stuff that you have now, who uses it today?

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** So we have around 30 different AI tools. We call them magic tools. Every magic tool does something different. So you were chatting about *The Colbert Show* or the movie, *Everything Everywhere All At Once*. They use one of our tools to do rotoscoping, which is, if anyone has ever done editing or film or has work in video perhaps knows, it's one of the most painful things to do in computer.

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** Just describe in plain English what rotoscoping is.



**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** Rotoscoping is just the task of taking an [00:48:00] object in a video and segmenting or creating like a layer, so you can remove that object from the video and then do whatever you want with it. You can put it somewhere else, you can color grade it, you can change it.

The thing --

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** You can manipulate a moving object and change its --

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** It's basically if you don't have a green screen and you can shoot with a blue or green background, you can take an existing video, but you have to manually go frame by frame, doing this very tedious, time consuming work, which is really expensive. And so we have an algorithm that does it for you. Just click once and you basically have the full video segmentation or rotoscoping done for you. And so for someone who's been working on video for years, who's spending weeks, I'm not kidding, this takes people weeks of work, having an AI system that does it in a second is just so liberating. Because the thing that you really don't wanna do that's taking so much of your creative energy can now be automated.

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** So this is the most positive version, or the version of the AI pitch that as -- I guess I'm called a creative for the purposes of this conversation -- that I'm most comfortable with. We're gonna take work that is [00:49:00] laborious and make it much faster. We're gonna take work that you wouldn't be able to do with your team cuz you have a small team and we're gonna effectively give you a Hollywood-level special effects thing, right out of a kit, basically. That sounds very appealing.

And then the part that scares people is no, that's gonna take away my job. How do you guys think about both the pitch that you're making to creatives and people like this is gonna help you do your job as opposed to replace your job, and what do you want this software to be able to do eventually?

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** Yeah, that's a great question. I think that the right approach here is that this will make your job different, right? So on the one end you have people who can already leverage these things who are already working in creative fields and automate these very boring aspects of creativity that you just have to do it.

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** But someone was doing that work, right? Someone was getting paid to do that work.

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** Exactly. And the nature of technology is that it makes this -- disruptive technology makes things more convenient and it's accessible and it's easy for everyone to use. And so on the one end, that job will become easier to do, which would allow other people to also be able to [00:50:00] do new stuff.

And so if you imagine that right now the people who can do rotoscoping are folks that can afford the software to do it, who have the technical knowledge, which basically means you need the background, the kind of experience or the know-how, or you have been probably like trained to do it, right? The moment you have someone, a system that does it for you, you open the doors for much more people to go and enter the next level, which is great. What else can you do with it?

And so on the one end, I think the nature of not just AI, I would say of any technological revolution, is really to make sure that things can be more efficient, effective, and convenient for people to use. And this is exactly the same case.

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** So the fear you hear about -- and the conversation is happening a lot right now during the writer's strike -- is, wait, what about the future where you're not just helping me do my work and make my work better, make my work faster, make my work more creative? Where's the part where you just replace me? The screenwriter, the special effects person, the actor? Because that's, again, is part of some people's pitch is you're gonna make an entire [00:51:00] movie that you're gonna type in something and it's gonna generate the entire thing on your MacBook and you're done, you don't ever have to deal with anybody else. It's gonna blow up Hollywood, et cetera.

Let's just assume that those are the most fanciful versions of it. But the reality should make some people pretty nervous. Am I going to lose my job?

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** I understand and empathize with that. And I think a great way of understanding the future is looking at the past.

And so if you think, for example, to the history of film and cinema in the 1920s, most of the films that were being put out and were circulating and were shown, were silent. So the moment technology allowed for films and filmmakers to add sound to that piece of work, there's a huge reaction, and a backlash, like Chaplin was against adding sound because the argument was like, who's gonna pay for the orchestra that's playing in the theater? And that's a valid argument. That's the truth. It is.

**PETER KAFKA - HOST, RECODE MEDIA:** If your job was to sit in an orchestra of a theater and make music, that would put you out of work.

**CRISTÓBAL VALENZUELA:** Who's gonna pay that? So we should prohibit and we should ban audio in movies.

And the truth is that one thing that's very hard for us to understand is change. I think in this case, this is no [00:52:00] different. This is changing the nature of how we understand media, entertainment, and creativity in itself. And so some jobs like orchestras in films will, yeah, will be gone. And, it's part of the process. But at the same time, the amount of value in jobs that were created because the technology was invented -- like picture every single detail industry, music industry that was born, the moment that was possible. And so that's I would say more of the right approach, to the right angle to look at this. And this is no different from what happened in the past.

## 'We Know Where He F\*\*\*ing Lives' - The Majority Report w/ Sam Seder - Air Date 7-17-23

**SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** here is actor Ron Perlman on the SAG strike and the producers who have been just really reprehensible in the way they've been talking about the SAG and the W G A strikes.

**RON PEARLMAN:** Do one thing before I get off this. The motherfucker who said We're gonna keep this thing going until people start losing their houses and their apartments, listen to me, motherfucker. There's a lot of ways to lose your house. Some of it is financial, some of it is karma, [00:53:00] and some of it is just figuring out who the fuck said that and we know who said that and where he fucking lived.

There's a lot of ways to lose your house. You wish that on people. You wish that families starve while you're making 27 fucking million dollars a year for creating nothing. Be careful, motherfucker. Be really careful. 'cause that's the kind of shit that stirs shit up. Peace out.

**SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** I don't think he really meant the peace out part.

**EMMA VIGELAND - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Yeah.

What a badass. It's important that actors that have that cachet have some money in the bank say that kind of stuff, because the actors making, you know, poverty wages, essentially can't do stuff.

**SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Well, that's, that's the fascinating thing about what we're seeing with these, these, this strike. Also with the writer strike, and I'm, I'm basing this [00:54:00] based upon both the writer strike from 20, uh oh eight and or, and, uh, you know, past strikes with, with actors.

The big names that you see for the, that are coming out, the big names. They don't need the union at this point, and they may not have needed the union for decades, the, the truth be told, but. They are, uh, showing solidarity with their younger selves. Mm-hmm. And, uh, and the vast majority of people in the union, frankly, who don't know if they're gonna get a job two months, six months in, in 18 months or whatnot.

Um, Uh, even if they do, and particularly now things have flattened, so there is no, like, there's no real fu money in the way that there used to be from for, for, uh, for people there. And it is, [00:55:00] there is so much work that goes in before you see pay auditioning. Uh, I mean the, the, the hustle and this and that, and then maybe doing, uh, shows that really don't pay you that much.

And then doing shows that don't even pay you enough that, uh, at the end of the year you can get health insurance. So you're always working two jobs for a long time. And, um, the, the difference we're really seeing in both these strikes is that the people who know that they're gonna lose money from this, And don't need, the union are showing solidarity with their union.

And that is, I think like a, again, like a, it it is of this era.

**EMMA VIGELAND - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** Yeah. I mean, it, it's, it's, I, I see this in sports too with like when, like the N F L P A or other labor um, unions, which are required for these leaks to [00:56:00] have antitrust exemptions. Um, they. When, when they stand with players that are making, you know, league minimum or whatever, it's most important when those people stand with them as well because, you know, it'll, you'll, you'll see these claims of hypocrisy when it's in fact the complete opposite.

Like the, you know, the, these, the, the highest paid athletes, the highest paid actors, they're the outlier. And the reason that they're speaking out is just because they've achieved the pinnacle of their profession and they're trying to not burn the bridge behind them. God forbid. Yeah. And like. It's a high profile example of labor solidarity that I, I think is some of the most helpful stuff that we're seeing. 'cause it's getting into the zeitgeist.

**MATT LECH:** Yeah. And our society is just really bad at, um, and the media is really bad at conveying what's going on to people. Like everybody talks about how highly paid, like for instance, basketball players are. Yeah. And it's like those contracts have gone up, but guess what?

The share. Of the labor, uh, perspec, uh, percentage versus the ownership percentage has actually gone down. Owners are [00:57:00] nearly at 49%. They were much less like back in the old days. So like that's the actual key is who, when, when Pearlman says like getting all of those millions for making nothing like, that's people who sit in those ownership positions, like they do nothing.

**EMMA VIGELAND - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT:** As say with with, with the N F L median salary 860 K, and then the average, uh, average year of, of playing is like four or five years, and then you don't.

What do you do with the rest of your life? Like with a broken body? With a broken body? I mean, now we're making it about sports, but, but, but the point is just like the, the, it's complete like the, these trade publications, like deadlines screw you who cover this stuff. They're so pro management and they really make.

They flatten these, they, they, they, they flatten the power dynamics and they make it about like, oh, these privileged actors when the reality is just so, so much different than how it's portrayed. It's the same thing in sports.

## **Final comments on closing in on the end of our membership drive**

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today starting with *The Majority Report* explaining how steady writing work is becoming part of the gig economy. *More Perfect Union* [00:58:00] discussed why most professional actors are struggling to make ends meet. *On the Media* looked at the rot of the old studio system and why it's coming back. *Vox* explained why streaming is the prime cause of the writer's strike. *Steve Shives*

explained why studio executives don't understand what creativity is. *CNBC* looked at the role of AI in this mess. *The Majority Report* spoke with Adam Conover, who explained the difference between what writers actually do and what AI is capable of. And *Wisecrack* looked at some of the history of labor strikes and the need for solidarity.

That's what everybody heard, but members also heard a bonus clip from *Recode Media*, which allowed a pitch for some of the positive aspects of incorporating AI into the creative process. And *The Majority Report* highlighted the heartless comments made by at least one studio executive that's been stoking anger.

To hear that, and have all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly to the new members-only podcast feed that you'll receive, sign up to support [00:59:00] the show at [BestOfTheLeft.com/support](https://BestOfTheLeft.com/support).

And now to wrap up, speaking of people needing to get paid a living wage in order to create the kind of creative content that people want, and that enriches their lives...

We're in the final days of a month-long membership drive. The enticement is that we're offering a 20% discount on memberships to access all of our bonus content this month. But the reason we're doing it is because we're a small team on a tight budget, and frankly, this drive is overdue, so we need all the help we can get.

Maybe you're already a member and might be up for increasing your support. Maybe you've been listening for years and haven't taken the dive yet. Or maybe you just found the show. In any case, if you get value from us, then I'd appreciate if you'd consider joining or even buying a membership as a gift to help keep us going. You can sign up at [BestOfTheLeft.com/support](https://BestOfTheLeft.com/support) and thanks in advance.

That is going to be it for today. As always, you can keep the comments coming in. I would love to hear your thoughts or questions about [01:00:00] this or anything else. You can leave us a voicemail or send us a text message to 202-999-3991 or simply email me to [jay@BestOfTheLeft.com](mailto:jay@BestOfTheLeft.com).

Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show, and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to our transcriptionist trio, Ken, Brian and LaWendy, for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing,

webmaster, and bonus show co-hosting. And thanks of course to all those who've already signed up to support the show; you have been keeping us going. If you'd like to continue the discussion, join our Discord community; there's a link to join in the show notes.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington DC, my name is Jay!, and this has been the *Best of the Left* podcast coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [BestOfTheLeft.com](http://BestOfTheLeft.com).