

Appendix C

Writing Your Arbitration Statement

The statement to the Arbitration Committee is the only opportunity you have to make your case for the credit you are seeking. Much like the opening statement in a trial, your arbitration statement should lay out what the “evidence” – the written material – will show regarding the proper credit on the project.

The Arbitration Statement is not established fact, just your assessment of the material. Ultimately, the Arbitration Committee is required to use their own judgment to determine which writer or writers should be credited on the motion picture and how, based on their own assessment of the material.

Use your statement to do the following:

1. Tell the Arbitration Committee what credit(s) you are seeking.

Tell the Arbitration Committee what credit or credits – Written by, Screenplay by, Teleplay by, Story by, Screen Story by, Television Story by, etc. – you are seeking.

2. Tell the Arbitration Committee what contribution is required for you to receive the credit you are after.

To answer this question, you have to know 1) whether you are the first writer or a subsequent writer and, for theatrical motion pictures only, 2) whether the screenplay is an original screenplay or a non-original screenplay. Guild staff will help you answer these questions and guide you to the appropriate rule(s) for the credit you are seeking.

3. Tell the Arbitration Committee how your contribution as reflected in the Final Shooting Script satisfies the rule for the credit you are seeking.

Here you want to give specific examples of contributions you made in your literary material that have been retained in the final shooting script.

Remember:

1. Keep the statement BRIEF.

Three to five pages should be sufficient to make your case for credit.

2. Keep the statement FOCUSED.

Limit your discussion to why – **based on the rules** – you are entitled to the credit you are seeking. Details regarding development, behind-the-scenes incidents, personality conflicts, and hiring/firing decisions, as a few examples, don't help the arbiters assess your written contribution to the final shooting script.