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THE STRIKE ERA

Why we need to renegotiate

There is no doubt that, as George Clooney said to [The Hollywood Reporter](#), "this is an inflection point". New factors have sped up a much-needed new set of rules to keep up with development, production, and distribution of the entertainment business. Our current industry is the biggest, richest, and most complex demand-and-supply audiovisual system humankind has ever seen. It is only natural that more specific rules apply.

2023

"What are we doing? Moving around furniture on the Titanic?", Fran Drescher, head of SAG-AFTRA asked while announcing the largest strike authorization vote in the history of the union (full speech on [NBC news](#)). She refers to contracts drafted before our current era when AI didn't even exist. The guild claims that during negotiations, the AMPTP tried to keep doing incremental changes on contracts that need to be fully redrafted.

[Deadline](#) has the official bulletin with a list of services all performers are expected to withhold.

Long Term Effects

The long-term effects of the strikes are still unknown – not because they did not happen before (read below), but because there wasn't a time in history in which audiovisual content was so central to human existence. We are for sure looking at an interruption in services down the line – new seasons and new TV series may not happen. Maybe we will dive into a rerun period, maybe the attention will shift to social media, or maybe international productions will get more notice. It is hard to predict.

Last Century

The last time a double strike (WGA and SAG-AFTRA) happened, Ronald Reagan was president... of the Screen Actors Guild! The year was 1960, and there was one main dispute: films produced by studios and released theatrically were now being played on TV, and both screenwriters and performers needed to get a cut of it. More [here](#). After this, in 1980, when the last Screen Actors Guild strike happened, the main reasons were points of contention that reflected the (then) new era: residuals from home media (VHS and on-demand) and a salary increase. It lasted 3 months and 3 days and since then, all contracts between studios and the SAG-AFTRA have been renewed without strikes.



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Deal Breaker

It is fair to say that new times request new labor contracts, so negotiations should not be a surprise. Strikes, however, are the last resort after many rounds of discussion. According to [The Washington Post](#), the studios have proposed small advances compared to what the guilds are demanding, especially when it involves the use of AI. And that should be a deal breaker, in all areas.

Cheers,
Laura

PS: If you want to find out more about the WGA Strike, read our previous newsletters [Strike a Line](#) & [And...Cut!](#)

BUSINESS