

October 4, 2012

Ronald G. Ball
PO Box 535
Lake, WV 25121

The Honorable Shelley C. Chapman
One Bowling Green
Courtroom 621
New York, New York 10004-1408

Dear Judge Chapman,

I am writing to you in regards to the Patriot Coal Company bankruptcy case.

My name is Ronald G. Ball and my wife's name is Vicky. I am 59 years old and a disabled coal miner. We live at Lake, WV in Logan County. I was born in Logan, WV and so was my wife. I have lived here all my life.

Almost 20 years ago Arch Coal Company, which is now going by Patriot Coal Company, advertised in the Logan Banner for an electrician/mechanic on a coal preparation plant. They promised union wages, union benefits, union healthcare, union retirement pension, etc... I answered the ad, which I was licensed for, experienced as, physically fit for and was willing to do.

When I started this job I had never seen an operation (the equipment at a mine) in such disrepair. About seven and a half miles of the equipment was worn out and barley running for more than a few hours at a time without breaking down. After about two years of constant repairs done by myself and the rest of the crew the mine could run 24 hours a day, seven days a week and broke all production records.

After working for this company for years I was seriously injured on the job, almost killed, and as a result I am disabled. I was diagnosed with muscular skeletal lumbar strain and sprain with a phenomenon known as contrecoup. I damaged six disc and have nerve damage in my spine. Because of my injuries I see a doctor at a pain clinic every two months and have to take several different medications just to keep my chronic pain at a tolerable level. I have a spinal cord stimulator implanted in my spine which helps with the pain in my legs and feet, this device and the medications are helping me to keep walking. I have high blood pressure and am pre-diabetic. Before my injury I had no major medical conditions. I was very physically active and able to work 12 to 14 hours a day, sometimes even more. But since my injury I have not been able to work, my health is so bad my wife has had to quit work to take care of me.

This pension check from Patriot Coal Company and the disability social security check is all the income we receive each month. If we were to lose our pension check and the health insurance it would be devastating. It would mean

a loss of a third of our income and my wife would have no insurance at all.

I do not understand how a company can just decide to no longer honor their obligations and responsibilities. This company has made millions and continues to make millions because of the hard work men and women like myself have done.

Justice is all I ask.

Respectfully,

Ronald G. Ball

Ronald G. Ball