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JAN 22 2013

U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

Judge Kathy A. Surratt - States,

It's not important who I am but what I was ~~for most of my life~~  
A proud hard working U. M. W. A Coal miner, "Always trying to give  
100% to the Company. I was a Mechanic and electrician inside the  
mines most of my working years until I was hurt and became  
disabled with a severe back injury that required surgery. This  
injury occurred after many many years in the mines. There was a  
Contract Agreement with the Company and Union for their workers  
to have medical or health care when the time come that they  
could no longer work. I gave 100%, my record has proof. I expect  
nothing less from the Company. A mutual respect, a binding Contract.  
I pray they do not forsake me now, and try to push me aside like  
I never existed. I have the scars and pain to this day due to  
my job in the Coal Mines, a Coal miners job was never easy.

I was twenty one years old when I first entered that cold, dark,  
damp hole in the ground, many miles underneath the earth and  
rock. A place most wild animals never ventured. A place over the  
years I would come to respect. Even tho it was a hard and  
very laborous job it becomes a part of who you are. But not  
so in the beginning. I was so scared that maybe I wouldn't  
make it back out, and what would my wife and son do without me.  
There was nightmares in the first six months or so, but gradually  
over time the over whelming fear left me, but always in the back  
of my mind knowing the rock and earth with miles under ground  
could give way, no matter how safe the Company tried to make it.  
you learned to listen for the sounds of danger, being so aware  
that your work place could become your grave, and nature proved  
many times that an explosion or rock fall can and does happen.  
Some of my best friends have died while working in the mines. I  
helped retrieve one of the best bosses I ever worked for.  
thousands of lbs. of rock fell on him. I will never forget the  
grusome sight, and days later hearing the rats fight over  
what man was not able to retrieve. He left a wife and  
two small children, another life for the price of coal. (over...)

So why would a young man put his life at risk every day?

- 1) My grandfather was a coal miner, my father was a coal miner, now me. I had a great respect for my dad. He was a very good provider a very intelligent and gentle hard working man. I would like to say I never met a dumb coal miner... Never.
- 2) I had a young family to provide for.
- 3) It was a needful job. It truly did keep the lights on mine and yours.
- 4) It was a good paying job, even with its high risk. I always finished my shift wore out. A days wage for a days pay that's the way it was. And if I had to stay late I did, 420 questions ask what ever it took to get the job done. That was the company rule.
- 5) Its Benefits: I would receive social security, a miners pension and from the company health care and prescription coverage. And when I became old and sick I wouldn't be forsaken. The company agreed by contract and I believed them 100%. If I had not believed them just maybe I would have gone in another direction. With every buyout whoever bought the mines knew they had a binding contract with the union on our behalf "the coal miner for life". That's what I worked for that's why I stayed. The company knew that the health care benefit would keep the miner working, and it means everything to the coal miner. It would just be wrong for the company to try to get out of <sup>the</sup> responsibility to us old and young workers. The health care I receive is not a free gift from the company. I earned it day in day out hard labor. The company made billions and billions, and we the coal miners got a fair wage and health care for life. We all agreed to that. I'm not asking for their billions and I don't want them taking my health care. It was a part of my salary, I earned it and it was to be spread out until the end of life.

We all knew over the course of time working eight plus hours in dust heavy labor, cold and damp environment.

would take its toll on our body. Lungs (Black lung) heart, joints, eye sight, and hearing. The Company knew it was day by day and year by year giving us a possible early death. When your body is broke down you need your medical Coverage more than ever. I use the word us because we are one "United mine workers". I personally take great pride in that. There is a binding respect between Coal miners.

It would be a terrible thing for me and my wife to lose our health and prescription Coverage because of our medical problems. I have had an aortic valve replacement (I will always need medication for that), hip replacement, a damaged back, knee and joint pain, high blood pressure, poor eye sight, and hearing loss. I do thank God that I am still alive. I am now 64 yrs. old, and am thankful for my years he has given me. Some of these problems I know is a direct result of my many years in the coal mines. Even with all the above I don't regret being called a Coal miner. It provided a good living for me and my family.

I ask you to please Consider what a Coal miner is and the hard work a Coal miner does and rule in our favor that the earned benefit that I have, be protected by your fair judgement. All I want the Company to do is: Do the right thing.

Respectfully yours,  
Joe Kluck

Joe Kluck  
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CLERK, US BANKRUPTCY COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI - MR

The Honorable Kathy A. Burnett - States  
Re: Case No. 12-5-1502  
Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse  
111 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
St. Louis, MO

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