**Billy D. Canterbury** 

809 Vogel Dr.

Charleston, WV 25302 304.415.0910

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SANKRUPTCY COURT

## **Your Honor:**

I am a sixty-year old man residing in WV. At age 19 I started working in the coal industry, but had to retire in 2007, at age 55, due to orthopedic conditions. Among those are a ruptured disc in back, L5, three injuries to my right knee, and two injuries to my left knee. All of which were work related. I have since been diagnosed with type II diabetes, and a heart dysrhythm, both in 2011.

In the early days, until the UMWA was formed, miners, and their families were treated horribly. We were persecuted for speaking out against safety and wage issues. At times, even murdered, which is well documented in the history of the coal industry.

During my career in the industry I gave a hard days work for a fair salary and benefits. Because of the contracts that were ratified and signed along the way, I was confident that Peabody would honor their commitments. In good faith we, the UMWA members, provided the labor needed to assist Peabody in it's endeavor to mine the coal necessary for them to conduct business, in exchange for fair compensation. To me, even a hand-shake would seal the deal, but the members signed, and the company signed. Using the metaphor of, signing in blood, is how I see it. We the employees honored our labor commitment throughout the years. In doing so we expected Peabody to honor theirs.

I understand if business sours, as many have during this economic crunch, that adjustments have to be made, but I don't feel this is the case with Peabody at this time. Several times in the last 10-20 years Peabody has use the guise of slowed business to bring in Patriot Coal. They will presume to sell it's holdings to Patriot, which in fact, Peabody remains in charge, in the shadows.

Before Patriots existence, their CEO was an executive with Peabody. Peabody uses this tactic, of passing the baton to Patriot, for the purpose of hiding behind bankruptcy, and defrauding the employees of their pension and benefits. If Peabody was filing total bankruptcy, and obsolving their company, then I might be able to view this differently. That will never happen. Peabody is a multinational, muti-billion dollar corporation, who intends to continue business as usual.

Peabody, like so many other companies, came into the coal fields and raped the land, then exit to leave reclaimation to the tax payers. Sure they have completed some reclaimation for public relations reasons. In closing your Honor, I beseech you, no I beg of you not to allow this to happen, for it is fraudulent in it's design. My existence is dependent on those benefits.

Your loyal and humble constituent,

**Billy D. Cantebury** 

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