

Wednesday 14 September

Dear Gary,

I received your letter last Thursday notifying me that my buyout application was accepted. I would like to point out, however, that the terms of the agreement are substantially different from what I and other employees were led to believe. It was our understanding that we would be given 45 days to accept or decline the company's offer and that, naturally, we could continue working at the paper during that 45-day period. Your letter makes clear that that option is not available to us and, indeed, I was informed by my supervisor, Leslie Guevarra, on Monday evening that my last day at the Chronicle would be this Saturday.

I want you to know that I am very disappointed and upset by the way the company is handling this process. I submitted my application with the clear understanding that I could choose not to accept the buyout offer and that, if I chose to accept it, I could continue working at the paper for an additional 45 days, and my financial calculations were based on that scenario.

I can think of only two explanations for this discrepancy between what I and other employees were told would be the terms of the buyout and the terms that were actually presented to us. Either management deliberately misled the Guild and its members or there was a serious misunderstanding which management did not bother to clarify. In either case, the company's actions strike me as being callous, deceptive and unfair.

I am sure management can - and will - argue that there is no language in the contract regarding a 45-day opt-out period, and that therefore the company has no legal obligation to provide it. There is no question that Guild negotiators should have insisted that this language be included in the contract. But I am equally sure that management was well aware that the employees were under the impression that such a provision did exist and that they were making critical decisions about their future based on that understanding. (Indeed, I know of several co-workers who were told directly by their managers that they would have 45 days to opt out of the buyout.)

I have been a hard-working, dedicated employee of The Chronicle for 14 years and, though I applied for the buyout, I am sorry to be leaving the paper. What makes me even sadder is that I will be leaving with a sour taste in my mouth because of the mean-spirited manner in which Hearst and its managers are handling this process.

Sincerely,

Peter Kupfer

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