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To the Copyright Office

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I was a Writer/Artist at Hallmark Cards and recently retired after 37 years of service. On my own time I freelanced on various projects and gave creative talks to school children. I also created an award winning animated film. I was approached by several studios to buy my cartoon (Cartoon Network, PBS, Nickelodeon). Knowing I was protected under the current copyright laws, I opted to remain unsigned so I could retain the rights to my characters and possibly pursue venues like books and toys in the future

I was diligent to keep my corporate and personal projects separate. Hallmark paid me good money for my creative efforts and has the right to use my work however they choose. I made sure my private projects nurtured my growth as an artist and did not infringe in any way on their business. Even with these well defined boundaries, a creative person is always walking a legal tightrope by producing original concepts.

I find the Orphan Works document vague and complicated. Technology is developing at lightning speed which makes it difficult to set parameters..The internet has become a significant pipeline for sharing information and purchasing goods. A common perception is that everything should be free to share online and fair use is taken for granted. In this type of environment, clear, enforceable rules should be offered to encourage and reward artists to stimulate creativity.

It seems the worst copyright infringers are groups trying to make quick money online or young people who don't know any better. I'm not sure how this legislation will rectify this. It seems like they're putting the job of policing on the shoulders of the creative artists- the very people who are harmed the most when their intellectual property is stolen.

Corporations, like inexperienced youngsters, need to be reminded of the value visual artists bring to others and themselves. I remember back in the 1980's when I would hear many people in the marketing department complain about cutting a check to Charles Schulz. It was for over a million dollars so they could use his Peanuts characters on Hallmark product. They felt it was an outrageous amount of money to pay someone who just drew cartoons. I pointed out that Sparky was charging a 7% royalty rate at the time. Imagine the amount of money he was making for the company and that he was contributing in some way to all of our salaries.

Most artists do not have the bargaining power of Mr. Schulz's popularity and recognition. I hope that the Copyright Office will do all that they can to protect the rights of innovative artists from the past, the present and for the up and coming dreamers of our future.

Sincerely,

Jeff Daly