

G-Si fferman-S-20050228100003

To: Julie L. Sigall  
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: S. G. Si fferman

Comment:

What do I do about this situation?

I was married in 1979 and the photographer is no longer in business. I have tried to contact him with the only phone number I have. I have googled him, done a web search, looked in all the local phone books and even gone to the physical location where he was located. There is another business there now that has never heard of the photographer. The gentleman was elderly back in 1979 and for all I know he may be dead. I was once contacted by the photographer a few years after we were married: I was offered the negatives to our wedding and at the time was not able to purchase them. The photographer was no longer going to be keeping the negs. (I know I was STUPID to turn them down, but I did as I did not feel I could afford them at the time).

So here we are 26 years later, no negs and what if I want a few copies of some of the pictures for my own enjoyment? (not to sell, or publish). Technology is good and the pictures could so easily be scanned and stored on a cd or I could get the few reprints I would like to have.

I am not out to make a profit or to publish any of these pictures. I would like to be able to pass them on to my children though and for each to have a set.

So what happens in situations such as mine? There is no way to contact a photographer or maybe the photographer is dead. How do we archive and preserve older photographs legally? Some older pictures also begin to deteriorate and fade. I'd like to know that I can safely and legally save these parts of my family history without being made to feel like a criminal.

I had one of my wedding photos torn in half by a curious toddler. If I want to have it restored and I can not locate the original photographer, how do proceed?

I think the copyright laws on these older photos are overzealous.