July 8, 2015

To: Maria Pallante, Registrar of Copyrights

Dear Ms. Pallante,

My name is Christine Gralapp, I am a medical and scientific illustrator in California. I have had my own small business for over 30 years, since 1984 when I graduated from the University of California at San Francisco with an MA. I have a specialization in surgical visualization of the head and neck. I work primarily in the academic arena, for surgeons and scientists who are developing new techniques and theories for improving patients' quality of life.

I rely on a strong copyright law to protect my income and livelihood. I am at a point in my career in which I have now amassed a large body of work, illustrations which I can relicense to new clients for new uses. Creation of this renewable revenue stream helps me to stay viable and keep the bills paid. The 1978 copyright law is a good protection for me as a small business owner, and is the basis upon which my business rests.

When I create an illustration, I do not sell the illustration, I sell the license to use the illustration. I retain the copyright, which allows me to control how my images are used, and insures downstream income when someone else wants to license the figure.

When I see my art being used in ways not authorized by me, it is an infringement, and it is akin to taking income out of my pocket. I am dismayed to see my art pirated and used on websites without my permission, but I know that the current copyright law protects me from these infringements, and can either ask for compensation from the infringer, or ask them to remove the art. I need to continue to have this control over my creations.

My work maintains its value when it is published—I own the copyright, and can continue to license it again and again—the value holds, and is an important part of my inventory. Just this morning I received a call from a video company in Florida who is happy to pay a license for reuse of a figure I did over a decade ago. This kind of reuse is golden to sole proprietors such as myself.

Please keep the copyright laws strong for artists and other creators. Big corporate aggregators clearly see the value of image libraries as assets. I have my own image library, which I will continue to protect, with the help of our strong, creator-friendly copyright laws.

Many thanks for hearing me,

Chris

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