Library of Congress
U.S. Copyright Office
Docket #2015-01

The moral of the story has always been that Goldilocks was in the wrong – just because you find someone else's work unattended doesn't mean it belongs to you. Pickpockets can't legally claim that another person's purse belongs to them just because it's hanging out in the open within easy reach.

So I'm writing to ask you not to replace existing copyright law with the legislation currently under consideration.

I have been a professional illustrator for nearly twenty years, and I've seen firsthand the transition from a physical marketplace to a digital one. I honestly believe that the ability to share, promote, and sell visual work online has been a positive change to the industry, and I'm proud to participate within a free Internet. It has been challenging, no doubt, to maintain control of my work in such a marketplace, but ultimately that challenge falls to me and me alone. Because there is also no doubt that work created by me belongs to me. I alone decide who ELSE can use my images. This is absolute and nonnegotiable, a basic tenant of copyright law and one of the individual freedoms that make this country great. I don't walk into your house and eat your dinner unless you invite me.

Rushing to call an unattributed work "orphaned" simply because it's easiest (or because it's more profitable for our corporate overlords) undermines this whole process. There is no reasonable way to stop pickpockets from stealing our images once they've been digitized, uploaded, tweeted, and spread across the globe. We understand that. But that's exactly why artists need the Copyright Department's support, rather than your surrender, in holding thieves accountable when they're caught.

Sure, victim blaming seems to be the new national pastime, but please:

Uphold the integrity of the creative class, rather than bowing to corporate interests.

Support artists who make their work accessible, rather than siding with thieves who invent ways to deny an artist's claim of ownership.

Don't expect the Three Bears to jump through legal hoops just because they stepped away from their porridge. You don't want to make bears angry.

Thank you,

Bruce Worden
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Scientific Illustrator, *Journal of Clinical Investigation*
Member, Guild of Natural Science Illustrators