July 7, 2015

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Lindsey Look, and I have been a professional science fiction and fantasy illustrator for the past five years. My work has been included in numerous art magazines, illustration annuals, on book covers, in gaming art, and many other places. I graduated with a BFA from the Art Institute of Boston almost a decade ago, and it's taken me almost the full decade to build up my portfolio to the point where I could get enough freelance jobs to fully support myself and my family.

Being able to sell the images that I create is how I make my living. If I do a book cover for X publisher in the United States, they get first print rights. After that, other publishing companies can contact me and pay to use them for their covers. I've had my work used for second printings in magazines, books, and calendars, all providing me with a substantial portion of my yearly income. I also use the images after publication for print sales and promotional purposes.

Retaining the copyrights to my image is not an abstract legal issue, it is the basis on which my business rests. If I wanted to give up the rights to an image, I would sell the full rights, providing a large amount of income for my family. That's because an image does NOT lose it's value upon publication, it can be used over and over again.

If my work suddenly becomes free for anyone to take off the internet as they please because it hasn't been "registered" with a commercial company, not only will it be preventing payment for a job already done, it will prevent many companies from hiring illustrators in the first place if there's already "free" work available.

Infringing on the rights to my work is like siphoning directly out of the money that I use to pay my mortgage and put food on my table. My career would be unsustainable if the Constitutional right to the exclusive control of my own work was voided. So would most freelance artist's careers.

What kind of world would it be if artists had to stop making art because our legislation wanted to give the public free access to people's copyrighted work? Not one that I would want to live in. I urge you not to pass the new US Copyright Act.

Lindsey Look
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