

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Copyright  
**Date:** Friday, March 19, 2010 1:00:13 PM

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*The Copyright Alliance has informed me of this welcome invitation from the Obama Administration to share my thoughts on my rights as a creator.*

***Dear Ms Espinel and President Obama's administration:***

***I am a freelance photographer and writer covering significant expeditions, cultures and landscapes in remote and sometimes dangerous places in the world. These pictures and their accompanying stories are difficult and often expensive to create and they have high enough value to be widely published on a regular basis around the world. I have authored a book, photographed many featured stories for National Geographic Magazine and worked for at least a hundred other publications.***

***Sadly, the quality of my work also makes it a target of theft. On repeated occasions I have found that unscrupulous publishers or advertising agencies have copied work that was licensed by someone else and without contacting, crediting or paying me, used it for their own benefit. This is little different than someone stealing from the shelves of a store.***

***After 40 years in this business I now make a very significant portion of my income from resale of photographic rights -- which I market either through my own small business or through my stock photography agencies. Both my agencies and I are completely dependent on strong copyright protection to retain the inherent value in our intellectual property.***

***Because I regularly register all of my images with the U.S. Copyright Office I do have recourse if I am fortunate enough to learn of an infringement. Unfortunately, that can be difficult to trace - especially on the internet or in foreign countries like China - but even right at home I worry about weakening of current laws via proposed legislation such as "orphan works" legislation or other changes regarding "fair use." There are strong forces in this country working to weaken copyright protection under various guises of the common good. These include even universities, companies such as Google and many others that want unlimited free access to interesting and exciting material.***

***In the end, this hurts everyone. Weak or poorly-enforced copyright can only damage both artists and our nation. Artists, musicians, writers, television producers, movie makers and others like us contribute billions to our economy and international trade. If our work can be easily expropriated without fair compensation, there will be little financial incentive to continue creating it. What a loss that would be to both our economy and our culture!***

***Thank you for your attention.***

**Gordon Wiltsie, president**  
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