

RENFIELD PRODUCTIONS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

March 10, 1993

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ON PICTURE, BROADCASTING
& RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

Mr. Winston Tabb
Panel Moderator
National Film Preservation Board
Library of Congress

Dear Mr. Tabb,

During the National Film Preservation Hearings in Los Angeles last month, a member of the Committee for Film Preservation and Public Access, Mr. Greg Luce, testified before the panel and voiced concern over the lack of public access to the thousands of archived films currently stored and preserved at the public's expense. As a member of this committee I wish to echo the sentiment contained in the committee's written statement.

As a practicing film director, writer and film historian, the advantages of ownership and control over physical elements are abundantly clear to me. These overall advantages are the foundation that provides the economic incentives which lead to further creative productivity which in turn further enriches our great American culture.

However, it seems grossly unfair to the American taxpayer that they must pay for the lion's share of the restoration, preservation and storage of many older filmworks without receiving any real benefit in return. This is especially true when the original donors have no intention of ever making the majority of these works available again. It seems only logical that upon the expiration of the 75 year term of copyright that reasonably controlled, general public access should be allowed.

I am acutely aware that the donor agreements between the various archives and the major studios currently restrict such access. However, in return for the years of publicly funded preservation it would seem only fair that the owners voluntarily rescind their perpetual control over all or at least the majority of these archived materials as they fall into the public domain. The National Film Preservation Board and other publicly funded archives should encourage the various donors to do this. Without this type of gesture it seems that further public funding is fruitless.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Dante". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned directly below the word "Respectfully,".

JOE DANTE

JD:bsm