

Schuster-Joseph-20050505110001

To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: Joseph Schuster

Comment:

A few years ago, I went to a photo lab to have my grandparents' wedding photo copied and retouched for an anniversary gift.

The photo lab pointed out that the back of the original was stamped with the name and location of the company that originally took the photos, and that I would need to contact them to get permission to make copies.

The company that took the photos has been out of business for decades. I tried every available lead, but found no way to contact anyone who could be considered the copyright owner.

Without any way to get permission, the lab refused to copy the original photo. They lost a sale and my grandparents were left with their single fading copy of an old photo, all because nobody wants to be sued for copyright abuse.

If we can't fix any other problems with copyrights and patents (the endless extensions of copyrights, the lack of a real patent review process, etc.) then let's at least fix it so people can copy family photos taken by companies that don't exist anymore.