

The simplest way of dealing with Orphan Works -- absent or opaque copyright ownership in all or parts of motion pictures (i.e. copyright in the photoplay itself as opposed to copyright in the underlying work) is as follows:

1--Officially recognise the problem of lost or opaque copyright ownership claimants

2--Obtain federal government legislative action conveying to your office blanket trusteeship for such works [a simple addendum to the existing Copyright Act] which you shall automatically declare after appropriate press notice which within a reasonable time frame invokes the response of real claimants to the title

3--In the absence of timely appearance of such ownership the office itself acts as the agent of the copyright and may make such use of it as seems appropriate, banking with the federal govt any payments/royalties/earnings/licencing fees until the date of the expiry of the said copyright

4--If before the expiry of the copyright true ownership appears it is to receive the permitted against the trustee made in good faith or against any licencor of the rights made by the trustee in the absence of the true owner

5--If at the expiry no ownership has emerged or proved its title, the earned funds revert to the trust for its own expenses or are estreat to the federal treasury.

Submitted by

Norman Klenman, president, Bridgevale Management Limited, a screen writer