

November 20, 2015
Chief, Litigation III Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th Street NW, Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Justice Department Review of the BMI and ASCAP Consent Decrees

To the Chief of the Litigation III Section:

My name is John Sebastian. I'm a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and a lifetime member of BMI.

I'm writing you today to describe what a disservice to songwriters and songwriting the proposed consent decree would create. Beyond the music/lyrics division, songwriting happens in many ways. I've co-written with my brother, my cousin, my bandmates, as well as with folks who make songwriting their entire livelihood. I've written in unlikely combos by e-mail.

To have this strange restriction on who to write with, or new excuses for delays in delivery of royalties (because that's what would be one of the repercussions) would be one more obstruction to a creative process already compromised by our current devaluation of intellectual property. I'd hate to have paused before collaborating with my brother to write "Summer in the City", or my Lovin' Spoonful cohort Steve Boone to write "You Didn't Have to Be so Nice" because of a difference of PROs.

You can skip this part about what it takes to get to write a decent 3 minute song, the 10,000 hrs. with an instrument, the failure rate you have to ignore, and the pitiful compensation most likely in your future. But to restrict who we can write with...when did this ever sound like a good idea?

Yours truly,

John Sebastian