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May 30, 2012

John R. Read
Chief, Litigation III Section
United States Department of Justice
450 5th St NW Suite 4000
Washington DC 20530

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JUN - 7 REC'D 2012

LITIGATION III, ANTITRUST DIV.
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

Dear Mr. Read,

I have worked as a professional novelist since 1998, and over the last fourteen years I've published forty-five novels under various imprints of Penguin Putnam and other major publishers. Seven of my more recent books have ranked on the New York Times mass market bestseller list. Since 2004 I've also hosted Paperback Writer, one of the most popular weblogs in the online publishing community.

I am writing to you to express my concern over the U.S. Department of Justice's suit against five major publishing houses and Apple, as well as the settlement related to this suit. While I respect the Department of Justice, and their attempt to protect public interests, this suit appears to be the result of yet another subversive attempt by Amazon to control the e-book market, force publishers to sell books at their price and on their terms, and inflict damage on any serious competitor.

I believe that Amazon's ultimate goal is to monopolize the publishing industry by any means necessary. The company has demonstrated this repeatedly through unsavory business practices such as predatory pricing and selling at a loss to undercut competitors. By accusing publishers and Apple of price-setting, Amazon does an excellent job of playing the victim as well as the hero, intent only on protecting itself and the public against a terrible – and possibly wholly invented -- conspiracy.

Please consider that Amazon knows how damaging anti-trust lawsuits are; they were the subject of one in 2008 after trying to privately force print-on-demand publishers to pay an additional fee by threatening the removal of the one-click ordering option from their sale pages. You can find a complete timeline as well as links to all of the litigation involved at this website: <http://antitrust.booklocker.com/>.

I would hate to see the Department of Justice and our laws being used as nothing more than Amazon's latest ruthless tactic to intimidate publishers and competitors. This time I'm afraid it will work.

Sincerely,


Sheila Kelly