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June 14, 2012

John R. Read, Esq.
Chief, Litigation III
Antitrust Division, U.S. Dept. of Justice
450 5th Street, NW, Suite 4000
Washington, D.C. 20530

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

Re: United States v. Apple, Inc., et al., 12-cv-2826 (DLC) (SDNY). Comments on Proposed Final Judgment as to Defendants Hachette, HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster

Dear Mr. Read:

I would like to join with other published authors in expressing my concern over the proposed settlement of the above-referenced lawsuit.

In considering whether this settlement is in the public interest, I would urge you to study the full history of Amazon's anti-competitive behavior in the marketplace. Through the words and actions of Jeff Bezos, it is easy to discern a monolithic "scorched earth" policy toward all book and publishing-related activities that are not seen as beneficial to Amazon exclusively. The ultimate goal: An industry completely under the dictatorial control of one man whose only interest is in wringing every last penny from the creative works of others.

The so-called Agency Model was a badly-needed corrective in a market segment that was essentially the province of one retailer engaged in predatory pricing for the purpose of market domination. It is ironic that by seeking to dismantle the agency pricing model, the Justice Department will effectively bolster and re-affirm Amazon's anti-competitive posture. How this can be perceived as being in the public interest is beyond me.

Indeed, I would urge an antitrust investigation into Amazon's practices as a retailer, distributor, and publisher that claims an unhealthy percentage of the American bookselling market. Amazon has done many fine and valuable things over the years to enhance the greater availability of literature over a broad range of platforms. However, in its relentless advance in the marketplace it seeks to destroy the very thing it currently profits from so handily.

Sincerely,



James Curtis
Author, Alfred A. Knopf