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June 6, 2012

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

RECEIVED *HW*

JUN 21 REC'D 2012

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

Dear Mr. Read,

I am writing as an author concerned about the Justice Department's suit against Apple and five leading publisher, and the settlement with three of them.

Like many authors, I have little business savvy and do not understand the intricacies of the suit at hand. I can speak, however, to the economic issues faced by writers for whom writing is not a pastime but a living. I don't mean those who write bestselling books that bring in millions, but the far larger group who sit down each day in front of their computers to write (and translate, for I do that as well) books that will bring in enough money to support the family and enable them to go on to the next project.

I am currently involved in preparing e-book versions of my two published books and am working on other projects that will no doubt be read only, or principally, in electronic format. Artificially low pricing of e-books, as practiced by Amazon, creates an economic climate in which writers of my sort will be unable to pursue their profession. These low prices simply do not reflect the labor of the writer and thus discriminate against all but the celebrities and independently wealthy.

Notably, here in Israel, where I live, a similar battle is underway. Here two major book store chains-cum- distributors together control the market. For several years now the two companies have been engaged in a pricing war in which nearly all the cost of the price cuts are being borne by authors. This week, the annual Hebrew Book Week, a group of the country's leading authors, among them Amos Oz and David Grossman, announced that they will no longer allow their publishers to sell their books at such ridiculous prices.

Yes, it's great for consumers to be able to buy books like tomatoes at the market, but in the long run consumers will suffer. When prices don't reflect the labor of writers, good books won't be written.

Sincerely,

HW
Haim Watzman