

You Wish You Could Have My Talent!

Isn't the above perhaps one of the most arrogant, self centered, obnoxious statements that any artist could make? Any artist who has this attitude deserves to have their eyeballs picked out by a murder of crows while being hung upside down from a tree in the Mojave Desert. In July. People who have this attitude, no matter what discipline, have my most utter disdain. Yes, you do need some pride, but you should have a good measure of humility thrown in to make a fine balance. It is simply called "graciousness".

Sure, these arrogant jerk-offs may not come right out and say it. And maybe they do have a flock of wanna-be groupies who would lick some part of their smelly anatomy to have some of the talent possessed by this artist. I would go so far as to say that there are some sicko, talentless idiots that go so far as to take on another artist's identity.

What!!?? You ask! What a friggen thing to say of someone. Yes, it brings me great sadness to say it is so, not to mention how utterly PISSED OFF I was at the times (yes, **MULTIPLE TIMES**) I have witnessed this first hand, and have heard similar stories from some of my bead-designer "sisters".

There are varying degrees of this stolen identity. Some much more "innocent" than others. Some frankly, in my book, are a non issue, and I really don't care. But they all amount to the same thing. Simply stated, they don't give credit where credit is due. I will list these degrees for you

LEVEL 1

A simple omission, and who gives a damned any ways???

In its most simplest, utterly forgivable form, it is either neglect or oversight to have created beadwork, display it either at a show, State Fair or on the web without a credit like "design by Hilda Beader".

I am absolutely honored when someone takes the thought and effort to include that credit, whenever I see it, just as I am sure other designers would feel honored. It's nice to be recognized. It's nice that you took the effort. It's nice that you remembered our names, even if you might misspell them. If you take the time and effort to do this, you deserve an award. You are amongst the most appreciative, respectful persons on this earth.

On web sites, "designed by [____] or from [Title of book by____] is an easy line to add. Please do it there, if you don't mind. It's really not a lot of effort. Honestly, every time I see this, it makes me smile, and I respect the heck out of you. But, if for some reason you can't, I promise I will still love you.

Likewise for State Fairs, that credit would be nice too. I don't know all the rules that these fairs have. If it is ok to use someone else's pattern, or if it is supposed to be your own original pattern. Perhaps each fair is different. If you are claiming to be using an original pattern by you, when you're not, then I hope some of your fellow beaders will rat on you, and get you disqualified. Because, of course, you are a LIAR! Oh....and by the way, those of you who DO win ribbons using my designs...PLEASE, PLEASE send me a jpg of your beadwork along side that ribbon. Seeing the ribbon you won, your beadwork, and my design worked up absolutely THRILLS me!! I would be happy to add it to the gallery on my web site!

In defense of you who do not add the little credit line at craft fairs, I will say that it is cumbersome and nothing less than a pain in the ass to have to do so. "Gee Whiz", you ask, "If I sell earrings made from the patterns by you at a craft fair, must I put "designed my Sig" on every earring card? Is that *really* necessary?" (We will talk about selling beadwork made from other's designs in another sizzling chapter).

Frankly, in my opinion, I would say no, you don't need to do that. Although I am sure other designers would have a whole different opinion on that. Well, let their egos take them away (they would also have a hernia knowing you are selling that bracelet designed by them...but as I said earlier, that is a topic for another chapter). Here is my reason. You have a card to put your earrings on, you have your logo and /or business name, perhaps the price is on the front as well. Maybe you even added the

“name for the design”. Now you gotta add “Designed by [_____]” in addition? Where? It will clutter up the card (Make it look like shit). Or maybe you don’t even put them on a card. You have some other display method that gives you nowhere to write. What are you supposed to do, put up a God damned neon sign?

Frankly, the average craft show goer is not a beader. They have never heard of any of the so called beading hot-shots that any beader who has been beading for more than a week has heard of, nor would they care. The “designed by [_____]” will mean nothing to them. They only care that they like the beadwork, and that you made it (not some mass produced third world item). A “designed by [_____]” is likely *not* a selling point. There isn’t a designer amongst us that has achieved name recognition in the manner of Gloria Vanderbilt, Sigrid Olsen, Calvin Klein or any other of those clothing designers have. I have never heard of someone saying, “Gee when are they going to open a Sig Wynne-Evans outlet store of beadwork. I just love her beadwork, but I need to wait until I can shop at the outlet store....” (Or has anyone heard of another bead artist with that distinction? I think not!)

So, what to do? Do you at the point of sale say “I made this from a design by [_____]”. Again, cumbersome, you may have a line of people (hopefully) at your booth that you have to serve quickly before they change their minds. And again, the name in all likelihood will mean nothing to the customer. But **IF** the customer should ask if you designed that particular piece of beadwork, answer honestly. “No, this is not my original design, it is by [_____]”, but the earring/bracelet/necklace is handcrafted by me, and I added these unique touches....” It is honest (for which everyone will respect you for) and doesn’t take away from your artistry in the least bit. Which now brings me to:

LEVEL 2

The Insecure Lying Little Cheat

I live in California. There are Art and Wine Festivals, Craft Fairs, Bead Shows, Bazaars within a 100 mile radius of where I live, almost every weekend of the year. I participate in my share as a vendor (as much as I have energy for since I do work full time). I also love just going to shows. Sometimes I go just to check the show out (is this one I might like to try in

the future?) but mostly I go just to spend a nice afternoon looking at artwork.

During my strolls at these shows, it does happen that I come upon some beadwork. Often, I will just look, tell the artist what a wonderful job she has done (even if it is lousy), and walk away.

On occasion, I will introduce myself, especially if the bead artist favors seed beads. Sometimes they have heard of me, other times not. But always, we have a terrific conversation. If this person has some beadwork made of some of my patterns, often I will sense a little bit of nervousness. I am quick to tell them I am happy that they are using my designs, (ahh... I see their relief) and again will gush over how nice their work is.

Then there are times when I really don't care to have anyone know who I am. I will see a booth of beadwork, see lots of earrings or whatever made from my designs. I will smile, then I say "terrific work" , I will get the response "thank you so much" and I will stroll away.

It has happened on occasion that this simple exchange has actually continued a tad further when I really just wanted to walk on. Unfortunately, not a pleasant exchange. Same scene as above:

A booth of beadwork, in which I see several of my designs. I will point to one of "*my*" designs and say "You did nice work on that!" She says "Thank -you, it is *my* own design that I worked out and beaded".

"OH, REALLY?? And this one too"? (another one of *my* designs).

"Oh yes, *all* the designs in this booth are *my original* designs".

It is then that I say "Gee, looks to me that they came out of (the name of the books these patterns were in). And I can say so since I am the author...look at my driver's license for the name."

Her response: "I changed the colors a bit, added different beads for the dangles, therefore they are my designs!"

Not to create a scene, I said "yeah, **what-ev-er** "!(remember I am Californian), muttered "F#\$% Asshole" under my breath and walked

away.

Are there people out there who think that changing a few colors, adding a dagger bead in the fringe when there were only 4mm crystals in the design, truly makes it THEIR OWN design?? If you answer yes, that it is so, and that these simple changes do make it theirs, and if you bring up the **bullshit** about “changing a design by 10% makes it a new different design” I will come and beat the crap out of you. (Another steaming chapter on copyright later).

Those simple changes would not make Miss Lying Cheat above the “Designer” anymore than if I were to go out and buy a car, change the tires to some hotshot style of tire, and repaint the car a different color. Could I then go to the car manufacturer and claim the car is my design? And sell multiples of them on my car lot under the name of Sig’s Motorworks Mfg? No, I modified the so called design of the car, perhaps you can say I PERSONALIZED it. But I did not DESIGN it!

Little Miss Lying Cheat was so insecure in her work, that she had to wrongfully claim a design as her own. Sad. Her workmanship was wonderful, the color choices and added touches equally as wonderful. Why then, couldn’t she be honest and say “no its not my design, but it has my personal touches such as.....”? Now that would be a secure person worthy of respect.

LEVEL 3

The Lying Goddamned Slimy Rip-Off-Artist

Many years ago, I was tipped off by a friend that there was a store in her area that was not only selling copies of my designs, but also packaging up kits to go with them. This was *many* years ago. I was still publishing books through a publisher. I did not own a computer at the time, and did not sell patterns individually. So this person was copying out of my books.

As coincidence would have it, I had planned a vacation to that particular area where the store was in, well before the tip-off. I did what anyone in my situation would have done. I visited the store, hoping that my friend was wrong, and that there was some big mistake.

It was a fairly small store. I browsed, looking at this and that. Not seeing what my friend saw. The store owner was very friendly offering help, to which I said, "Thank you, just looking for now". He was a seemingly nice guy. How could someone so nice do such a horrible deed that my friend accused him of?

And then...right there...in the back of the store, I saw something that made me lose all hope in the honesty of this store owner. A variety of MY earring designs, from my books. Same color keys, same titles and redrawn on a computer (my early books were hand drawn). On an 8.5 X 11 sheet of paper with the words "design created by (not MY name!!)", and yes there were beads with the pattern to make up a kit. I was furious. My hard work, and I didn't even get the measly pitiful royalty that my publisher gave me. I didn't even get a lousy book sale because this idiot was essentially tearing out pages, copying them and selling them.

I took three of the kits. I went up to the register and asked if he was the owner of the store (just to make sure my assumption was right). He said he and his wife are the owners.

Then I said "These are really nice designs".

He replied "My wife creates all these designs, they are all her originals. I am proud that my wife creates beautiful patterns such as these".

GEE F#\$%^ WHIZ!!!! Still no honesty.....still nothing that would redeem him in my eyes.

I paid by check. He never looked at the name on the check, or at my driver's license. He started to put the check away, and I stopped him. I said "Aren't you going to look at the name on the check?"

He did, and looked me square in the eye and said "And, so.....??"

Ok , not only was he an idiot, but he must have been be the Clan Leader of Idiots.

So I told him the bad news. I stated my name, clearly, and that the designs he just sold me came out of my books, and their titles. That I, at

that moment , request that he stop selling those patterns of mine (even listing the ones I did not buy) since he had not obtained permission from either me or the publisher I was with at the time. That he was in violation of the Copyright Laws and I would be sending off my purchases to my publisher. I was certain that my publisher would send him the legal “Cease and Desist” letter.

Next, the Clan Leader of Idiots showed me that he was more supreme than I thought. He was in fact, the Ruling Monarch of All the Clans in a Nation of Idiots. Probably even one of the most exalted, most revered ones of the Monarchs of Idiots in the world. He flat out told me that I didn't know what I was talking about. He was not in violation of copyright laws, and he could do whatever he damned well felt like and there was *nothing* I could do about it.

I of course left the store. What was I going to do?? Create a scene and be arrested? Oh that would be great, wouldn't it ? I sent on the packet to my publisher and let him deal with it. I don't think that store is in business anymore, but I am sure it had nothing to do with my little experience with them. I think it was just Karma.

Lesson, if you do not hold the copyright to a pattern, you do NOT have the right to copy and distribute the pattern, under *any* circumstance. Get it??? **COPYRIGHT= RIGHT TO COPY**

LEVEL 4

Pond Scum would be too nice a name for you, asshole!!

This has got to be the hands down winner of all the idiotic, unbelievable things I have ever seen or even heard of! For this blatant, cheater, I hope she rots in Hell. There is no room for forgiveness, there is no room for saying “it was a mistake” there is no room for any sort of rationalization.

It is nothing sort of pure stupidity, greed and downright identity theft. And it is something I am sure you will think I made up. I did not.

While visiting another state, I attended a craft fair. It was a fabulous fair,

well attended and big! Incredible art work of all sorts. In addition, it was a picture perfect beautiful day. The sun was shining, the birds singing, I was in the greatest of moods, walking around looking at fabulous artwork. There could not have been a more perfect day!!

I was eating a fantastic Brat, slathered in mustard and sauerkraut, just like my German heritage demands I eat "Wurst", when suddenly the world around me froze. Just like in the movies, when someone stands looking in disbelief, people around the actor seem to be frozen in motion, the birds stop singing, the sky gets dark, the music stops, the color is washed out of the world, everything is black and white. That's how it was for me.

I dropped my wonderful Brat, right there on the ground, my mouth wide open, strands of half chewed Brat, mixed with mustard, sauerkraut, and soggy saliva filled bread, dripping out of my mouth in streams of clothing staining gook. I couldn't move, I couldn't speak. I was dizzy and totally sick to my stomach. I thought I was in need of some emergency medical attention, since I was losing control of my body functions. Not a pretty sight.

There it was, right in front of me, the only color in the colorless world around me. It was still in color as if to add insult to the horror I already felt, a gleaming white canopy, with all sorts of colorful, shining beadwork inside. Even from where I was standing, I recognized MANY of my patterns!! Nothing new yet, you say. But there.....on that gleaming canopy was a sign (no, not from God). A sign that they PAID for, a banner in bright, bold, gleaming letters that *SCREAMED*

"THE BEADED BEAR , BEADWORK BY SIG"

No!! Tell me it is not so. Tell me I am seeing things. Tell me that in whatever I had eaten for breakfast, the mushrooms in the omelet perhaps, was really that other kind of "Shroom" that some take for vision quests. That the vision I saw was really something in **MY** future. **MY** booth set up right here, at this wonderful fair. Tell me that! PLEASE!!!

I took a deep breath, brushed off the yellow gook that was sitting on my ample chest (nothing ever falls on **my** lap!) thankful I was wearing a tie-died shirt that the dribble could blend in with, and approached that

beacon of horror.

I looked around. Gee, there was a positive way of looking at this. I had a FAN! She LOVED my work. So much so, she used it almost exclusively! That *must* be a compliment.

I was still speechless. I still couldn't say anything. Then I heard Ms Pond Scum say something. It sounded like "Hi, Do you like my beadwork? These are all *my* designs. I am well known in the bead world as I have written these books. If you see something in these books that you would like that's not made up, I will be happy to make it for you."

But what it sounded like and what she in reality said to me was: "I am ripping you off, *bitch!* And I don't really care. I can claim to be you, and SO WHAT! Give me a chance, and I will do it some more!"

I was dumbfounded. I almost become a blithering idiot myself. I looked at the books Ms Pond Scum was pointing to. They were my books! Each one of them. I looked at her, she looked at me, I knew she was wondering what was wrong with me as my face contorted into something that looked like it belonged in a horror movie. The only thing I could say is "Are **YOU SIG WYNNE-EVANS**"?

Pond Scum smiled. Perhaps misinterpreting my reaction to be something resembling AWE. "Yes" she said, "You know of my work? Do you bead? Do you have my books, if not, I can sell you an autographed copy?"

Pond Scum has pushed me over the edge. I lost all reasonableness that a human being should have. Mind you, I am usually cool and collected under heated confrontational situations. My day job as an OSHA inspector (kinda like a cop for occupational safety and health) demands it. I have been trained on how to deal with difficult people and volatile situations, I always strive to uphold levels of professionalism in my day job, and as an artist. But here I was...**all** my training, **all** my experience, **all** my know-how in how to deal with situations such as this flew out the window.

The words that spewed forth from my mouth made me think I was possessed by demons that even the Catholic Church could not exorcize. My head must have spun around and spewed green vile. From the look of Pond Scum's face as I told her who I was, and showed her my driver's

license as proof, I am sure she thought I was Lucifer in person. The things I said are not fit for print, nor do I honestly remember everything I said. They say when you go into shock, you don't always have total recollection. But I will always remember the sheer look of terror on Pond Scum's face.

The only thing I am sure of regarding the end to this horrible story, is that my friend who was with me, ran off to get the show promoter. He knows me well enough, to know when I reach this rare level of passionate anger, help and resolution is needed. IMMEDIATELY. Fortunately, this level has only occurred 3-4 times in my entire life. But each time, those involved have never forgotten it.

Help came in the nick of time. I know my next act would have been to start tearing down Pond Scum's booth, starting with that offending sign. The promoters listened to my story, looked at the sign, at my license (I show that damned thing more often to prove who I am as an artist than for any other reason!!). They had the good sense to tell Pond Scum to remove her booth from the show. They also gave me tickets for new Brats and several glasses of wine for both me and my friend.

As I sat and watched Pond Scum leave, the color came back into my world, the birds started singing. And once again.....a tiny measure of Karma occurred as I saw her try to drive away.....her van hiccuped in a cloud of black smoke, and she couldn't start her van!!

If there is one lesson I would like everyone to learn or at least consider, it is that designers work hard, and of our "talent" does come from years of practice. We are people who take pride in our work, and offer our small pieces of skill to you, so that you too can enjoy them, and even profit from them.

A simple credit, at the appropriate time and place is a thank-you back to us, and a sign of respect. It does not take away from your skill, nor make your work worth any less. But it sure does make you more worthy of respect and give you honor. From the hearts of all of us designers, we thank you so much for this small, but important gesture.

