

Reviews

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Larissa Kingston Mann. *Rude Citizenship: Jamaican Popular Music, Copyright, and the Reverberations of Colonial Power*. University of North Carolina Press, 2022.

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Larissa Kingston Mann's *Rude Citizenship* is quite simply the best example of critical cultural scholarship on copyright law that I have yet to encounter. By situating her qualitative participant observation of Jamaican popular culture in its deeply researched historical context, and especially by taking the time to thoroughly articulate its past and present legal contexts, Mann achieves something truly remarkable in the field. I will begin by summarizing its scope, and then make a case for its potential to inform future scholarship. While at first glance this book might appear to be simply another ultra-niche academic monograph, a deeper look reveals that Mann's insights can illuminate productive ways forward in critical legal scholarship, popular culture studies, and post-colonialist work writ large.

In many ways, Jamaica presents the ideal case study for a critical analysis of copyright. As a former British colony under American cultural hegemony, the letter of Jamaican copyright law derives directly from the Anglo-American understanding of intellectual property (IP) that governs the most influential and profitable popular culture products in the world. Yet, the infrastructure to adequately document and enforce copyright law has never existed at any point in Jamaica's colonial or national history. Despite this fact, this tiny island nation has produced an unbroken string of globally influential popular

music genres from Mento to Ska to Rocksteady to Reggae to Dub to Dancehall. While only a fraction of the financial rewards from this popularity has found its way back to Jamaica, the creative milieu that so consistently produces new global phenomena does not appear to be primarily motivated by economic return. This fact flies in the face of the original Anglo-American justifications for copyright law as necessary "for the encouragement... to write useful books [or other creative mediums]" and "securing... the exclusive right" to profit from them. In Jamaica, as Mann so convincingly demonstrates, the incentive to create derives from the lack of any other means with which to express cultural sovereignty, bodily autonomy, or economic agency.

This underlying paradox of copyright and cultural understanding is perhaps best illustrated by relaying Mann's opening example from the book. She begins with a description of a 2009 singing competition in Kingston where the performer received a negative review from one of the judges for not being sufficiently "original." Rather than an indictment of the use of a cover tune, the judge was instead critiquing the performer's choice to use a backing track they created themselves rather than one that had passed the true test of Jamaican originality: public popularity evidenced by widespread use. If such a usage of "original"—a word crucial to Anglo-American philosophies of IP—seems counterintuitive, that is precisely Mann's point. Jamaicans understand originality and ownership according to completely different cultural logics than those which produced the legal definition of copyright in colonialist countries.

Other terms such as "phonographic orality" (an emphasis on combining recorded sounds with live, and often spontaneous, performance elements) and "exilic spaces" (the cultural niches carved out by those on society's margins) are defined in the Introduction as a basis from which Mann can launch a comprehensive critique of colonialism's inability to make space for the community-centered creative practices of Jamaica's poor. Understanding copyright as a legal concept is at times the point of this book, but it is never the main point. Copyright is merely the unifying throughline through

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which the creation of popular culture is examined. Primary modes of analysis shift in the book from historical (Chapter 1) to ethnographic (Chapter 2) to ethnomusicological (Chapter 3), but copyright cuts through the many layers of meaning and provides a cohesive narrative structure that supports insightful analysis on practically every page.

Among the most insightful observations in this book is that copyright law may in fact *undermine* creativity by allowing large media entities (record labels, film studios, publishing houses, etc.) to hedge market influence and consolidate control of cultural influence through mass ownership of creative works. Certainly, popular media are subject to the impulses of popular tastes in every corner of the globe, but in places like Jamaica, popular music is exposed to the whims of the market in real time with no social or economic safety net. If a performer or sound system operator does not sufficiently hype the audience at a street dance, they might be booed into shutting down for the night, lose any future chance to perform for the community, or in an extreme circumstance risk physical harm from an irate crowd. In many ways, the lack of economic security that copyright and its corresponding enforcement infrastructure can provide requires a level of excellence in live performance that far exceeds expectations in the cultural industries of wealthier nations. Such realities run directly counter to the logic of Anglo-American copyright law as necessary to incentivize creativity by securing exclusive rights.

By doing the incredible amount of research necessary to understand the intricate details of copyright law, situate Jamaican popular music in its historical context, and conduct extensive ethnographic fieldwork among leaders in the local industry, Mann has produced a work that is of exceptional value. Any future critical cultural work on copyright and IP should consider this book a must cite. It can provide an excellent example for critical cultural legal work in general, especially in its accessible writing style. This book would also be a useful syllabus addition in any class on ethnographic methods, particularly if the popular culture angle or connecting ethnography with historical research is an emphasis. For post-colonialist and subaltern studies, this book provides a template for using a concrete concept like copyright to structure a narrative and transition from theoretical pontificating to analysis that might produce material change. If scholars of law and technology, popular culture, and media studies follow Mann's example, we might find that academic work on copyright can actually make meaningful change less by influencing legislation, and more by centering artists and their creative practices in ways that empower them to create more freely and sustainably.

Jason Lee Guthrie, Clayton State University

Denny Tedesco (Director). *Immediate Family*. Magnolia Pictures, 2023. immediatefamilyfilm.com

For readers of this journal, popular music has long been understood as a powerful force, both in business and art. However, it is only in recent decades that the general public has begun to recognize its full artistic value and, to a lesser extent, the unsung heroes of pop. The 1960s and '70s in the Los Angeles popular music scene marked a significant shift to the West Coast and a peak in American music's creativity and commercial success. The past twenty-five years, with a few exceptions, have seen a departure from the traditional norms of physical album sales, the singer-songwriter as a pop star, and a close-knit circle of session musicians. Films like *Immediate Family* serve as a time capsule, preserving this influential, peak period, for future generations of music industry students.

Director Denny Tedesco, first in his work *The Wrecking Crew*, and now in *Immediate Family*, has masterfully brought to life the musicians behind the biggest hits of their respective eras. *The Wrecking Crew*, a collective of dozens of people, played on iconic '60s-era records by a diverse range of artists, from Sam Cooke to the Beach Boys. Tedesco's new documentary hones in on four musicians whose studio and live playing brought the music of singer-songwriters to life in the '70s: Danny Kortchmar (guitar), Russ Kunkel (drums), Leland Sklar (bass), and Waddy Wachtel (guitar).

The Wrecking Crew members were largely pre-baby boomers, primarily born in the 1930s (some in the '20s and a few in the '40s). Having honed their musical chops in the pre-rock era before the mid-'50s, these musicians brought jazz and classical influences to some of the biggest hits of the 1960s. The *Immediate Family* members, born post-World War II, were of the same rock and roll generation as the artists on whose records they played. Their contributions to these recordings were quite different from those of their predecessors, heard in a move away from a "wall of sound" type of production to a stripped-down ensemble that was more akin to a touring band.

With exceptions like Hal Blaine, in demand into the '70s, Tommy Tedesco, who did TV work, or Glen Campbell, who became a star, the *Wrecking Crew* was essentially a '60s phenomenon not often credited or known outside the music industry. The *Immediate Family*'s most successful work together was also primarily confined to one decade—the '70s. However, with a particular understated, song-serving style, its members played on (as well as occasionally wrote and produced) records well into the 1980s and, to a lesser extent, continue today. Whereas the *Wrecking Crew* was a collective, these players, now known as the *Immediate Family*, more often functioned as a rock band.

Though sessions backing singer-songwriters were their bread and butter, the group also branched out musically, evidenced in the bass and guitar virtuosity of Sklar and Wachtel respectively. Members effectively backed diverse artists such as song stylists like Linda Ronstadt, pop/rock writers/performers like Phil Collins and Stevie Nicks, and rock legends like Keith Richards. Danny Kortchmar was adept at transitioning to production in the '80s, and as a producer to Don Henley, helped bring him from a '70s country rock group member to an '80s solo pop star. These players, artists in their own right, are still touring today (individually as side personnel and collectively with the youngest member, Steve Postell, as the Immediate Family).

Popular music is now an essential art form, and we are increasingly fortunate to have well-produced documentaries like *Immediate Family*. With its intimate and personal narrative, this film allows us to hear the voices of these largely behind-the-scenes musicians. The audience is not just treated to candid stories from the Immediate Family, but also to heartfelt and revealing commentary from rock luminaries, including Jackson Browne, Phil Collins, David Crosby, Don Henley, Carole King, Stevie Nicks, Keith Richards, Linda Ronstadt, and James Taylor. This immersive experience is a testament to the importance of the Immediate Family members' collective and individual contributions to a range of iconic songs, from "You've Got a Friend" to "Werewolves of London" to "Doctor My Eyes" and so many more.

This new documentary is thoroughly modern in its production and includes several effective instances of the musicians playing a signature part as the rest of the original track fades in. Son of the late Wrecking Crew guitarist, Tommy Tedesco, director Denny Tedesco's *Immediate Family* includes eighty-six songs in its soundtrack. As evidence of his continued push for the lesser known (or unknown) contributors to receive acknowledgement for this great art, the movie credits contain not only the typical recording and publishing copyright information, but also a comprehensive listing of the following contributors: everyone who played keyboards, guitars, bass, drums/percussion, horns, strings, and sang background vocals on recordings in the film's soundtrack, as well as every producer, engineer, arranger, and conductor.

In the classroom, *Immediate Family* is a vivid companion or contrasting piece to *The Wrecking Crew*, which shined a light on the music production model controlled by the elders of the industry. *Immediate Family* captures when the new era, tight-knit backing band of rock and roll peers reigned over the studio scene. This new model was the genesis of pop music in the 1970s and beyond, a transformation that the documentary beautifully illustrates, allowing the audience to feel the seismic shift in the music industry still resonating today.

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