Copyright Infringement and the CISSP: 
Washing Mud off the (ISC)²

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In part one of this series, security-awareness expert K Rudolph of Native Intelligence describes how she discovered that a CISSP-holder whom she is calling “Mud” submitted 11 of her posters to a contest after stripping her printed copyright notices off the images. Today we find out what happened. K continues her story.

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Following the instructions on the (ISC)² Web site, I fired off an e-mail to the (ISC)² ethics committee contact, with an electronic version of my complaint in the form of an affidavit and screen shots. The next day I express-mailed a notarized hardcopy. I asked (ISC)² to remove the images and to add a large notice informing those who had downloaded my poster images to delete or purge the copies from their files and that they could replace the posters with copies having the correct attribution and copyright notice from the Native Intelligence, Inc. Web site – at no cost. I also offered to provide (ISC)² with the correct images.

(ISC)²’s response was to remove the images by 9:30 the following morning, but they did not put up the notice I had requested. I sent a second request. Their General Counsel quickly replied that he had passed along my offer and confirmed that he had received my complaint.

Mud’s contact information was listed on the (ISC)² members-only area. I e-mailed Mud a letter insisting that he immediately cease and desist from representing Native Intelligence, Inc. (NII) products as his own work and that he notify those to whom he had provided NII images that the images are the work products of NII, and if received without NII permission, are illegal copies. The letter instructed Mud to provide me with a list of all entities to whom he had falsely represented the NII work products as his own, to forward any compensation he received related to NII work products, to provide copies of all NII work products that he had altered in any manner, and to purge any and all NII work products from any storage device or media to which he has or has had access.

His response fell short. He thanked me for bringing the matter to his attention. He then wrote (errors are his), “I apologize so much for this mistake which was not intended, the materials are totally purged from media and the location they were uploaded to (ISC)² and the organization was informed with this mistake.” He finished with, “Please accept my apologies and total respect.”

Respect? This reminds me of when a wife walks in on her husband and her best friend in bed together and the husband looks up at her and asks, “Which are you going to believe, me or your lying eyes?”

Like Mud, I’m also glad that I brought this to his attention. I don’t agree that this was an unintended mistake. Taking 11 individual poster images, removing the copyrights, and then
sending them to (ISC)² is not an unintended mistake. Further, his work background clearly shows that he knew better.

Let’s hope that the board will wash the Mud out of the CISSP collective.

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