

April 24th, 2018 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The “monkey selfie” saga is FINALLY over

In 2011 nature photographer David Slater traveled to the forests of Indonesia, where he encountered a curious crested macaque by the name of Naruto. A series of events were set in motion, that left photographers, lawyers, and animal rights activists across the globe enthralled. The resulting image, dubbed “the monkey selfie” started a fascinating court battle that finally came to a close yesterday.

[April 24th, 2018, Walnut, CA] Three years after David Slater first met Naruto, PETA (People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals) argued that Naruto owned the copyright to the image. They filed a lawsuit against David, claiming that they were seeking financial control of the photograph, for Naruto’s benefit. The image had gone viral, having been picked up by several big media outlets.

“Naruto should be considered the author and copyright owner, and he shouldn’t be treated any differently from any other creator simply because he happens to not be human” – Jeff Kerr, PETA

Wikimedia Commons then published the image, alleging it was a public domain work. David continued to argue for the image to be taken down as it was his intellectual property, but to no avail. Wikimedia’s widespread posting of the image purported to be in the public domain encouraged unlicensed use and illegal exploitation and has left David without the opportunity to fairly license its use.

The saga looked to be over in 2016 when a federal judge ruled that a monkey cannot own the copyright. David and PETA then reached a partial settlement agreement that saw David donate a percentage of any income generated from the infamous snap to charities working to protect macaques in Indonesia. This did not, however, settle the matter entirely. As the ninth circuit court of appeals refused to let either party drop the case, and yesterday they delivered the conclusive blow in a debate that has continued for nearly a decade.

They unanimously decided that lawsuits cannot be filed claiming that animals have copyright to photos. The court specified that copyright can only be claimed on behalf of humans. The court also ruled that David is entitled to attorneys fee recovery. This is great news for the photographer, who has spoken openly about the huge financial impact the case has had on him. He at one point contemplated dog walking or teaching tennis as an alternative to photography.

In a statement posted to [his Facebook page](#) on Monday night, David spoke of his relief that his battle with PETA was over, but stated that it was never his intention to stand in the way of the progression of animal rights;

I so hope that wild animals are granted more and more fundamental rights in the future – like rights to dignity, survival, homeland, and their evolutionary privileges. They accept us as part of their landscape, with a big SMILE. We need to accept them as part of ours don't you think? – David Slater

As copyright experts, fighting for the rights of image creators across the world Pixsy has followed this landmark case with interest. If you would like to support David, you can legally and properly obtain your own monkey selfie from his website here –

<https://www.djsphotography.co.uk/monkeyselfie.htm>

About Pixsy:

Pixsy is the leading copyright legal-tech service for online image protection. Founded in 2014 by photographer Daniel Foster, Pixsy is an award-winning startup with over 30,000 photographers & artists in its community. Pixsy has processed over 50,000 copyright infringement cases and works with more than 26 partner law firms across the globe to bring justice for creatives.

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Sources:

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