



News

Home

Links

References

Quotations

- [Index of Plagiarists](#)
- [Academia](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [History](#)
- [Journalism](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Pop-Fiction/Non-Fiction](#)
- [Science and Medicine](#)
- [Theology and Religion](#)
- [Miscellaneous Cases](#)
- [Plagiary's Hall of Shame](#)
- [What is a Plagiarist?](#)
- [The Death of a Plagiarist](#)

## Entertainment



[New Journal Release--Plagiary--Call for Papers](#)

... ..

### Plagiarism and Pastiche in the Audio-Visual Age

Entertainment--now here's an area where the potentially lucrative paybacks outweigh the dangers of engaging in wholesale rip-off. Movies, songs, music videos, you name it. The euphemistic *byting*, *referencing*, *sampling*, and other thefts going on in today's entertainment scene are a very rich source of material for those wanting to investigate what is happening in the realm of the audio-visual. Nothing wrong with revisiting a certain theme, motif, or guitar riff--but don't expect your claims of innocence to hold up in a [court of law!](#)

Closely related to the problem of plagiarism, stringent copyright laws are broken these days with seeming impunity and disregard as shipment after shipment of unauthorized CDs and movie videos are confiscated. There is big \$\$\$ in piracy and appropriation of ideas, both in the US and in the overseas markets. As Rob Raskin, former editor of *PC Magazine and Family PC* noted in a letter to the *New York Times*:

[T]he high-tech industry has . . . put the youngsters into such a rip-burn-share frenzy that they have no inkling that intellectual property matters. The scary part? These are the same values that we're seeing in the adult workplace. (April 7, 2005).

Billions--literally--are at stake. Just ask Steven Spielberg, or rather *Steal-berg* in the view of [Barbara Chase-Ribaud](#), and he'll explain the difficulties of fighting off plagiarism allegations while filming *Amistad*. Plagiarism has been called various names in the audio-visual realm: the [dirty little secret of the music video industry](#), *sampling*, *byting*, *referencing*, or more respectably, *cryptomnesia* when the plagiarism appears to be unintentional as a result of "sub-conscious" influence. Whatever labels and epithets are attached to such derivative activities, the economic implications both impel creative minds to protect what is theirs, and incite gold-diggers to sue for damages at the least hint of apparent derivation with settlements potentially worth millions, whether or not the allegations had any basis at all.

... ..

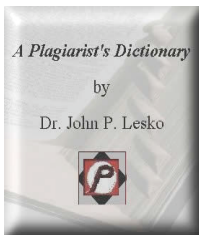
### Profiles in Plagiarism: Entertainment

Apple Computer, Inc.



Statement on "Fair Use" of copyright materials in this work.

Quiz: Name that Famous Plagiarist



Make a Donation

Found something useful at this site? Want to see the public naming/databasing of plagiarists continue? Please consider dropping a bit of spare change in the hat via secure PayPal in support of the Famous Plagiarists



This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons License  
(Attribution, Non-Commercial,  
No Derivs 2.5 License).

**Profile:** ENTM-2006-Apple  
**Name:** Apple Computer, Inc.

**War on Plagiarism Threat Level:**  **Blue: Guarded Risk**

**Occupation:** Computer company; New client for Intel computer chips

**Allegations:** Ripping off a Postal Service music video for use in a new TV commercial; possibly just a case of "cross-promotion"

**Results:** Blogosphere commentary and speculation

**Known for:** Computers for non-PC users;

**Overview:** Is this another case of a "cross-promotional" gimmick, something akin to those viral ads which pop up now and then, taking on a life of their own as Internet surfers endlessly replicate an image/video in blogs, chatrooms and discussion boards?

Duncan Rawlinson of the [Last Minute Blog](#) posted these side-by-side images of the latest Apple Intel promo which "features a shot-for-shot recreation of our video for Such Great Heights made by the same film-makers for the original" (Postal Service's Ben Gibbard quoted in contactmusic.com article "Postal Service Accuse Apple of Plagiarism").



The discussion at ["Cult of Mac"](#) is a lively one, with different ideas as to whether the similarities between the Postal Service "Such Great Heights" promo and the Apple TV commercial might be nothing more than "cross promo" for both the band and the computer company:

Rip-off, homage -- who cares?  
It's an ad and a music video (an ad for music), not "art."  
And it's got us all talking about BOTH of them, which really, is part of the goal, innit?

Another poster holds a somewhat different view on what Postal Service's Ben Gibbard and Jimmy Tamberello maintain is an un-authorized "commercialization . . . executed without our consultation or consent":

As someone who works in the advertising industry, this would be an embarrassment to the creative and account management teams as well as the client.

Side-by-side comparisons of stills from both videos are available at [Elite Productions](#), as are links to view both the music video and the Apple ad.

Matthew Solarski and Zach Vowell of [Pitchfork](#) refer to the previous cross-promo gig between Postal Service--as in *the band* Postal Service--and the United States Postal Service. This cross-promotional agreement came after a spate of wrangling back and forth between the two entities, including a "cease and desist" order from the USPS to the band ("Postal Service Accuse Apple of Plagiarism"; "The Postal Service Gives Up!: Electro-Pop Duo's Feud With the United States Postal Service Ends in Bizarre Cross-Promotion").

So is this case of Apple going postal an instance of plagiarism or just another cross-promo stunt? Definitely a remake, as another "Cult of Mac" poster observes:

. . . it's the visuals that are similar, if not identical. Plus it's the whole idea: the concept, the setting, the narrative. Compare the corridor tracking shots, the movements of the wafer-making machines, the interaction between the male and female workers. The Apple ad is not just "influenced" by the Postal Service video, it's a remake.

Gibbard and Tamberello indicated they have no intentions to take legal action against Apple Computer, Inc. And this *in*-action is most telling.

If it's really plagiarism and/or copyright infringement, why not sue for damages?

#### References

**End Profile ENTM-2006-Apple**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Ayaan Hirsi Ali & Theo van Gogh



**Profile:**

ENTM-2004-AHA/TVG

**Name:**

Theo van Gogh & Ayaan Hirsi Ali

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**

 **Green: Low Risk**

**Occupation:** Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Dutch politician

Theo van Gogh: Dutch Film Director [deceased: murdered on the streets of Amsterdam, verses from the Quran affixed to his body with a knife blade in a symbolic gesture carrying vengeful religious overtones]

**Allegations:** "[A]ping" the artwork of artist Shirin Neshat in the

film "Submission" [see [ifilm version](#) of this if still available or the Wikipedia entry on [Theo Van Gogh](#) for further info. Caution: Discretion advised. Film clips contain highly objectionable content including graphic depictions of violence/nudity/criticism of Islam and the Qur'an]

**Results:** Plagiarism allegations eclipsed by the murder of Theo van Gogh in a chilling act of [Islamist](#) revenge

**Known for:** Both Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh are/were known for their outspoken criticism of Islam and perceived Quran-legitimized brutality toward women

**Overview:** Shortly after Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Theo van Gogh's film "Submission" was broadcast on Dutch television in 2004, allegations of plagiarism surfaced against this politician-filmmaker duo.

The film was a volatile mix of criticism aimed at the Quran and the violence often enacted against women under the guise of Islam [i.e. so-called "honor" killings, female genital mutilation, wife-scourging, stoning for adultery and the like]. The title of the film itself is an English translation of the literal meaning of Islam--*Submission*. The film mockingly portrays a woman's *submission* to her husband's brutality, and by extension, *submission* to Allah. Though she can't stand the smell of her husband (even after a bath) following an arranged marriage, she *submits* to him. But she questions this *submission* aloud in the film, right on her prayer carpet in the middle of a stream-of-consciousness type conversation with Allah . . . "Oh, Allah . . . after a series of threats and warnings, he starts to beat me"

Interspersed with these prayer scenes are flashed images of Quranic verses inscribed on a woman's body (verses from the Quran which allow the "scourging" / "beating" / "hitting" of *unsubmissive* wives--see various translations of *Qur'an*, Surah 4:34), juxtaposed with other quickly flashed images of the bruised and beaten body of a woman--a bruised face and a black eye, scourge marks on the woman's back, black and blue legs. The message is unmistakable--the woman is cringing as if being scourged by the Quran itself.



Even after being raped by a male member of the extended family, the woman still *submits*, keeping her protests to herself so as not to damage the reputation of her husband.

Coming from an ex-Muslim and an "infidel", this stinging criticism of Islam and the Quran was particularly potent. Both Hirsi Ali and van Gogh meant to criticize perceived injustices toward women in the Islamic world, injustices which might seem to be legitimized by the Quran. Typical of an "infidel", Theo van Gogh even joked that he wanted to provide Al-Jazeera with a copy of his new film ("Hirsi Ali and Van Gogh deny Muslim film is plagiarism"). He would later beg futilely for his life on the streets of Amsterdam, at the mercy of an

Islamist assassin.

Before van Gogh's death, Francisco van Jole accused Theo and Ayaan of plagiarizing the idea for their film from Iranian-American artist Shirin Neshat. Expatica News reported Van Jole's allegation that "Submission" derived substantial content from Shirin's work: "Anyone who compares the images automatically gets the taste [taste?] of plagiarism in their mouth. The worst thing is that neither Hirsi Ali nor Van Gogh acknowledges the debt" ("Hirsi Ali and Van Gogh deny Muslim film is plagiarism").



(photos by Shirin Neshat, allegedly the inspiration for "Submission")

However, this does not necessarily seem to be a valid allegation. The Iranian-American artist did feature images of women with text adorning their hands and feet, but this is actually a common practice in the Middle East, women using dye extracted from the henna plant to decorate their bodies, particularly in preparation for a wedding. The use of *Quranic* inscriptions on a woman's body in *criticism* of Islam seems to have had its origination with Hirsi Ali and van Gogh.

In any event, this allegation of plagiarism was completely eclipsed by the violent killing of Theo van Gogh in a chilling act of Islamist revenge by a Dutch citizen of Moroccan ancestry, Mohamed Bouyeri. Theo van Gogh is reported to have begged for his life to no avail as an Islamist assassin finished the bloody job. First shooting van Gogh, and then using the same blade with which he had slaughtered the "infidel" in a near-decapitation, Mohamed Bouyeri pinned verses from the Quran to his victim's dead body along with the names of politicians who were next on the Islamist hit-list, not forgetting as well the pro-forma Islamist message of hatred for Jews, Christians, Europeans, and Americans.

More *derivative* than the film "Submission" would seem to be the use of *assassins*, those *hashishiyun*

who had experienced euphoric visions of the paradisiacal afterlife while high on hash and were fanatically devoted to the religious mission of ancient Islamic sects. Freedom of speech means nothing to these *hashishiyyun*, ancient or modern.

[**Note on terminology:** As opposed to the more general descriptor *Islamic*, the word *Islamist* is used here in the sense of political, jihadist, radical Islamic belief]

References

End Profile ENTM-2004-AHA/TVG

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Michael Bolton



**Profile:** ENTM-1991-MB/SONY  
**Name:** Michael Bolton

**War on Plagiarism Threat Level:**



**Occupation:** Pop-Musician, Singer, and Songwriter

**Allegations:** Plagiarism of the Isley Brothers song "Love is a Wonderful Thing"

**Results:** 10 million copies of album in question sold by Bolton worldwide; Bolton and Andrew Goldmark awarded a Grammy; Isley Brothers awarded \$5.4 million for copyright infringement by a District Court jury, the "largest damages award ever made in connection with a music plagiarism case" (Columbia Law School Music Plagiarism Project); Appeal by Bolton resulted in upholding of jury decision by the 9th Circuit Court; Supreme Court declined to review the 9th Circuit Court's decision

**Known for:** Soul sound hits and remakes such as "When a Man Loves a Woman", "(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay", "Love is a Wonderful Thing"

**Overview:** When the 9th Circuit Court upheld the original \$5.4 million judgement against Michael Bolton for his copyright infringement of the Isley Brothers' "Love is a Wonderful Thing", the 3-0 decision sent a clear

message that derivation--even subconscious derivation--can end up costing a musical plagiarist quite a hefty sum of money.

The Columbia Law School's [Arthur W. Diamond Law Library Music Plagiarism Project](#) (C. Cronin) has posted a copy of the 9th Circuit Court's decision on *Three Boys Music v. Michael Bolton* (212.F.3d 477--9th Cir. 2000) denying Bolton's request for a new trial, and upholding the original "District Court's jury award against Michael Bolton and Sony." Sound file links at Columbia's "Music Plagiarism Project" contain both versions of "Love is a Wonderful Thing", allowing site visitors to sample for themselves both the "Complaining", and "Defending" works.

In Part II of the 9th Circuit Court decision, the significant points of the case are discussed including the following:

*Access*--"an opportunity to view or to copy plaintiff's work", evidence of this being offered in the form of circumstantial evidence, citing previous cases of "subconscious copying" [the technical term for this is *cryptomnesia*], as well as the "the Isley Brothers' song [being] . . . widely disseminated on radio and television stations where Bolton and Goldmark grew up."

*Substantial Similarity*--"proof of the substantial similarity [being] . . . satisfied by a two-part test of extrinsic similarity and intrinsic similarity"

After *Access* and *Similarity*, the legal discussion in the *Three Boys Music v. Michael Bolton* judicial opinion moves on to issues brought up during the trial including "Sufficiency of the Deposit Copy" [with the copyright office--Bolton challenging this copy based on differences between the deposited and recorded versions of the song], following by an analysis of the monetary award factors, "Attribution of Profits" and "Deduction of Tax Liability".

In the words of this decision by the 9th Circuit Court, "the Isley Brothers undoubtedly contributed something original to 'Love is a Wonderful Thing' . . . Having found that the law was properly applied in this case, we leave the district court's decisions and the jury's credibility determinations undisturbed."

#### References

**End Profile ENTM-1991-MB/SONY**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## James Cameron



**Profile:** ENTM-1991-JC  
**Name:** James Cameron (and International Creative Management)

**War on Plagiarism Threat Level:**

 **Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** Film Director

**Allegations:** Lifting the idea for the morphing character in "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" from the screenplay "The Minotaur"

**Results:** A lawsuit was filed against Cameron with an initial dismissal of charges by a district court; In an appeal by the Australian screenwriting duo Filia and Constantinos Kourtis, a federal appeals court judge ruled that the lawsuit may proceed ("Terminator 2' plagiarism lawsuit can proceed")

**Known for:** Directing and co-writing the popular film "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, a former actor described by some pundits as a "condom stuffed with walnuts"

**Overview:** **The Texterminator ? ! ? !**

Did James Cameron lift ideas for *Terminator 2* from a more obscure film by two Australian screenwriters?

After a successful appeal by an Australian screenwriting duo, Filia and Constantinos Kourtis, *The Star Tribune* reported the ruling of a federal appeals court which held that the "Terminator 2' plagiarism lawsuit can proceed".

This is a victory for the Australian couple whose initial lawsuit was dismissed by a district court.

According to the allegations of the Australian screenwriters, a morphing character which they developed for use in their movie "The Minotaur" was ex-appropriated by Cameron for use in the wildly popular "Terminator" series in which terminator-turned-governator Arnold Schwarzenegger played starring roles.

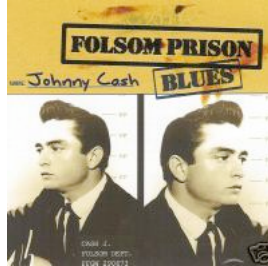
Allegedly, a writer by the name of William Green, who had been hired by the Australians to work on the screenplay of "The Minotaur", shared the script under development with James Cameron, director and co-writer of "Terminator 2: Judgment Day".

According to City News Service, "While Constantinos Kourtis was attending an Australian Film Commission event in Hollywood in 1989, Cameron allegedly called him and told him he 'loved the project' and that his agent would be calling him 'soon'" ("Director James Cameron sued for plagiarism"). After the release of



a line which, as Cash's biographer Steve Turner reports, caused "a wave of applause [among the Folsom inmates], presumably coming from men who'd either done the same or wished they could. Cash did nothing to quell their enthusiasm" (*The Man Called Cash*).

Perhaps such lines about shooting a man just to watch him die (Cash has been called the "[Godfather of Gangsta Rap](#)") made Gordon Jenkins hesitate before suing. When he did sue, it wasn't until after the 1968 release of the *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison* album, thirteen years after Cash's first release of the single "Folsom Prison Blues" in which he used those lines from Jenkins' 1953 album *Seven Dreams*.



But then again, as Steve Turner speculates, perhaps Jenkins never heard the first release of "Folsom Prison Blues". Cash's "authorized" biographer gives only several pages to this instance of copyright infringement which seems to have been settled with a cash payment [undisclosed?] to Jenkins.

On his *Seven Dreams* album, Jenkins' wife had sung about leaving Crescent City:

*If I owned that lonesome whistle  
If that railroad train was mine  
I'll bet I'd find a man a little farther  
down the line  
Far from Crescent City is where I'd like to  
stay  
And I'd let that lonesome whistle blow my  
blues away.*

Cash sang the following in "Folsom Prison Blues":

*Well, if they freed me from this prison  
If that railroad train was mine  
I'd bet I'd move on over a little farther  
down the line  
Far from Folsom Prison that's where I want  
to stay  
And I'd let that lonesome whistle blow my  
blues away.*

(Turner, S. *The Man Called Cash*, pp. 60-61).

Turner suggests that Cash first heard Jenkins' *Seven Dreams* while serving in the US Air Force in Germany, "perhaps played by one of his more sophisticated urban friends." Given Cash's unique talent for composing and songwriting, talents which were evident from his school days, he certainly had no need to crib lines from another composer. A case of cryptomnesia perhaps? A case of thinking he had modified the tune enough to make it his own with reference to Folsom Prison instead of Crescent City?

As Cash's popularity and influence grew, he found himself pestered by many a songwriter wanting him to perform the "next big hit". When he did perform songs previously written/performed by others, his voice and stage presence were such that the songs became *his* songs--regardless of whether he had composed them or not. "That's *his* song now!" was the response *when the man came around*, ownership ceded to the icon, the legendary "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash".

He freely gave of his inspiration from his own storehouse of ideas as well, as in the idea for the "National Anthem of Rock-n-Roll", "Don't step on my blue suede shoes", a phrase which Cash suggested as a potential song to Carl Perkins (another idea which seems to go back to Cash's experience in the USAF).

If he crossed the line at all in other instances of borrowing from other songwriters and performers, these have not come to light. Apart from this relatively minor instance of infringing on the work of Gordon Jenkins, for which he eventually paid his dues and did his time, Cash walked the line away from plagiary's ring of fire.

#### References

**End Profile** ENTM-1956-JC

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Coldplay



**Profile:** ENTM-2005-CP  
**Name:** Coldplay (Chris Martin, Jon Buckland, Will Champion, Guy Berryman)

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**

  
**Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** British rock band

**Allegations:** Derivation and plagiarism from various musical sources

**Results:** No significant results other than an admission that "we should have had a bibliography, or a discography, or references."

**Known for:** Top rock songs in Great Britain; "England's favorite rock & roll songs" (MTV)

**Overview:** The British band Coldplay whose songs topped the UK charts in 2000 has admitted to charges of plagiarism in their "X & Y" album.

It seems that there have been no repercussions other than the band acknowledging that they probably should have referenced their sources of inspiration in the form of a discography.

The Yahoo UK News reported comments by vocalist Chris Martin in an interview with Xfm: "As people listen to the album more and more it'll become apparent just how much we've plagiarised . . . To me, at the end of our album we should have had a bibliography, or a discography, or references."

Sometimes it seems that such derivation is almost intentional, a purposeful aligning of one's self with famous names in the past so as to evoke a similar response in the popular mind. For example, ripping off the last part of Coldplay's "What If" from the Beatles might be seen as an attempt by the group to associate themselves with the likes of their British rock-n-roll predecessors.

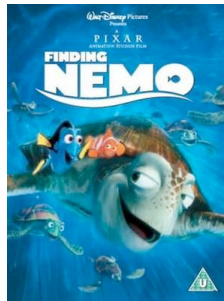
#### References

**End Profile ENTM-2005-CP**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Walt Disney and Pixar Animation



**Profile:** ENTM-2003-WD/PIX  
**Name:** Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**

  
**Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** Animated Films Production

**Allegations:** Plagiarism of the *Finding Nemo* cartoon fish from French children's author

**Results:** French author sued Disney and Pixar for breach of copyright and trademark

**Known for:** Animated films for children

**Overview:** After the release of the Disney Pictures/Pixar Animation film *Finding Nemo*, a French author sued for damages claiming copyright and trademark infringement.

Franck Le Calvez, a French children's author, had created a fish character he called "Pierrot Le Poisson [fish] Clown" in 1995 and had registered his trademark creation.

Finding difficulty in interesting French film producers, he published a book with Pierrot as the hero.

Although there is a resemblance between Pierrot and Nemo, Disney/Pixar claimed that their creation was an "independent development" and that it did not infringe on anyone's copyrights or trademarks.

This did not ease the misfortunes of Calvez, whose books are being pulled from the shelves of French booksellers who think Calvez has plagiarized Disney's Nemo!

Le Calvez expressed disappointment at seeing his own fishy creation "swallowed up" by the larger fish released by Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar animation.

Is it possible that Calvez animated-fish-idea was passed along by French animation studios to the US? Perhaps. Such little guy vs. big guy cases--or rather, would that be little fry vs. big guy?--are difficult to substantiate, and Calvez may have trouble in netting any profits from his creative fishpiration.

**Latest update:** According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, "Disney/Pixar [is] off hook in 'Nemo' suit." A court ruling cleared Disney and Pixar of plagiarizing Pierrot Le Poisson [fish] Clown from Calvez and ordered damages paid to both Disney and Pixar by Flaven Scene, publisher of the French fish story by French children's author Franck Le Calvez.

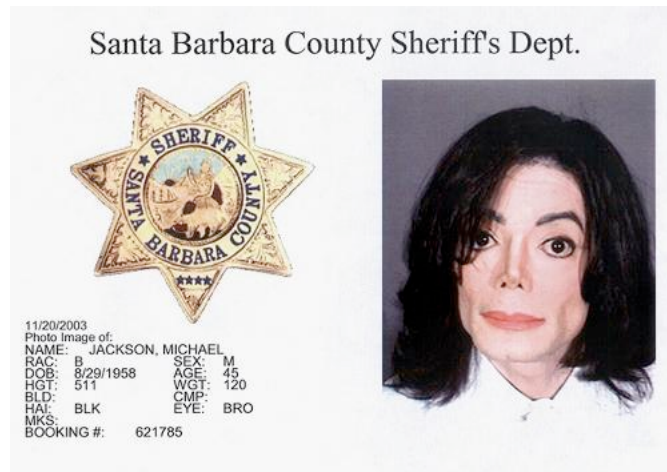
References

End Profile ENTM-2003-WD/PIX

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



**Ray  
Hultman**



Profile:  
Name:

ENTM-2005-RH  
Ray Hultman

War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:

  
**Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** [Michael Jackson](#) trial juror-turned-book-author

**Allegations:** Verbatim plagiarism from an article in *Vanity Fair* magazine by Maureen Orth

**Results:** Early criticism of Hultman's forthcoming book *The Deliberator* when an early release of an extract resulted in plagiarism allegations; [Jackson moved to the Persian Gulf and settled in Bahrain](#) shortly after the trial, cross-dressing in a black abaya and scaring women in the restrooms at a shopping mall in Dubai



**Known for:** Serving on the jury which acquitted Michael Jackson of all charges relating to sexual molestation and child abuse

**Overview:** [Monstersandcritics.com](#) reports that the early release of an extract from a book by Ray Hultman, a [Michael Jackson](#) juror-turned-book-author, has resulted in allegations of plagiarism by Maureen Orth. She alleges that Hultman lifted lines from an article she wrote for *Vanity Fair* magazine in which she described Michael Jackson's appearance as follows:

Up close, Michael Jackson's appearance is amazing. He wears a black pageboy wig, and his face is caked with white makeup, which conceals a prosthesis that serves as the tip of his nose. One person, who has seen him without the device, says he resembles a mummy with nostril holes.

This description of Jackson was allegedly copied for use in Hultman's forthcoming book, *The Deliberator*, the description being a repetition itself of urban legends and speculation about the pop-star which have taken many forms over the course of Jackson's career. His metamorphosis to stardom has intrigued fans, followers and critics as is evident in Internet image critiques such as the following:



Hultman's book publicity consultants claim that Hultman didn't actually commit the plagiarism of the lines about Michael Jackson's appearance: "the writer that wrote those lines for the book's proposal has since been sacked from Hultman's writing team."

It would appear from such a comment that Hultman isn't actually writing *The Deliberator*. Instead, he's having a team of writers draft the book for him based on his experience as a juror in the Michael Jackson trial.

Ghostwriters galore! You mean many "authors" haven't really written the books which bear their names? That's right. In the name of profit, the book publishing industry cashes in on the public interest in the private lives of celebrities. Even if it means assembling pre-existing chunks of text in their rush-to-press "chop shop" mindset.

We'll have to wait and see how \*Hultman's\* *The Deliberator* looks once it's off the press. \*Hultman\* is apparently going to \*write\* about his view that Jackson should have been convicted rather than acquitted at his widely followed sexual molestation trial.

**The Verdict:** We find the defendant, Michael Jackson, not guilty. Not guilty of plagiarism or textual molestation, er, I mean sexual molestation. [Immediately after the reading of the verdict, the juror stampede out the door begins, a rush to get their story to press first, as Michael Jackson himself hotfoots it to Bahrain]

References

End Profile ENTM-2005-RH

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)

Takehiko  
Inoue



Profile:

ENTM-2005-TI

Name:

Takehiko Inoue

War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:

 **Yellow: Elevated Risk**

Occupation: Artist and Graphic Designer

Allegations: Visual plagiarism

Results: "many have taken delight in the claims" ("Slam Dunk' Manga Magazine Fouls Out Over Plagiarism Claims")

Known for: Authoring the basketball-themed "Slam Dunk"

Overview: The author of "Slam Dunk" has been accused of visual plagiarism and is "facing accusations that he stole work for 'Slam Dunk'". Some of the cuts of players pictured in 'Slam Dunk' are almost identical to the photos of NBA players in basketball magazines" ("Slam Dunk' Manga Magazine Fouls Out Over Plagiarism Claims").

These allegations follow similar accusations which Inoue himself made against fellow artist Yuki Suetsugu. These accusations led to a court victory for Inoue and a banning/recall of Suetsugu's "Eden no Hana" book series ("Slam Dunk' Manga Magazine Fouls Out Over Plagiarism Claims").

Accusers beware! Be sure that you have no hidden plagiaristic sins before voicing that allegation of plagiary against another.

[References](#)

End Profile ENTM-2005-TI

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



Curtis  
Jackson,

AKA

50 Cent



**Profile:**

ENTM-2006-50¢

**Name:**

Curtis Jackson, AKA 50 Cent

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**

**Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** Rap artist

**Allegations:** Lifting lines from 2 Live Crew's "It's Your Birthday" for use in 50 Cent's "In Da Club"

**Results:** Lawsuit filed against 50 Cent in Miami Federal Court as of January 2006

**Known for:** Controversial rap music

**Overview:** As Josh Grossberg quipped, "50 Cent's going to spending some time in da court, thanks to a song-stealing beef", a play off of Curtis Jackson's (real name of 50 Cent) song "In Da Club" ("Fiddy's 2 Live Suit").

A copyright infringement lawsuit against 50 Cent has been filed in Miami Federal Court by Richard Wolfe, "the lawyer who helped push Campbell [Luther Campbell of 2 Live Crew] into bankruptcy" (Gardiner, S. "Lawsuit Claims 50 Cent Stole Lyrics From 1994 Luther Campbell Song").

The song in question, "In Da Club", is off of 50 Cent's album *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, and the song allegedly rips off the lyrics of Luther Campbell's 1994 hit, "It's Your Birthday" from the album *Still A Freak for Life*.

Campbell is not involved in this lawsuit, having relinquished control of the songs copyright after declaring bankruptcy in 1994. But Campbell is on record as stating the two songs have "the same tone, same pitch, same melody" and that lyrics are "virtually the same" in parts of the song ("Fiddy's 2 Live Suit").

Someone may be set to get rich off this bit of *sampling, byting, referencing*, or whatever one wants to call the similarities between these two songs by Campbell and 50 Cent. And it's not the musicians. It's the lawyers who've got a

. . . plan [. . .] to put the rap game in a  
choke hold / I'm feelin' focused man, my  
money on my mind . . .  
My flow, my show brought me the doe  
That bought me all my fancy things  
My crib, my cars, my pools, my jewels . . .  
. . . If you talking bout money homie, I  
ain't concerned / I'm a tell you what Banks  
told me cause go 'head switch the style up  
If the niggas hate then let 'em hate  
Watch the money pile up

(from 50 Cent's "In Da Club")

[References](#)

**End Profile** ENTM-2006-50¢

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Michael Jackson



**Profile:**

ENTM-1999-MJ

**Name:**

Michael Jackson (and Sony Music, Mijac Music, Fortissimo Editoriale)

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**

  
**Blue: Guarded Risk**

**Occupation:** Songwriter; pop-musician; the "King of Pop"

**Allegations:** Plagiarism of 1986 "The Swans of Balaka" [I Cigni de Balaka] by Italian songwriter Albano Carrisi for use in Michael Jackson's "Dangerous" album

**Results:** Years of legal wrangling in which Jackson's legal team finally prevailed after a previous loss in a lower court

**Known for:** Pop-star hits; a lavish lifestyle; bizarre antics; sexual-molestation trial widely publicized

**Overview:** "Not guilty" was the final verdict. No, this wasn't the Santa Barbara County Courtroom at the end of Jackson's sexual-molestation trial ([related case of plagiarism involving a juror at the Michael Jackson trial](#)).

Rather, as reported in *Billboard*, this was the Court of Appeals of Milan which ruled that Michael Jackson was not guilty of plagiarizing a song by Albano Carrisi (M. Dezzani, "Michael Jackson Appeals Italian Plagiarism Ruling").

The legal wrangling and appeals had gone on for years with Carrisi claiming that Jackson had lifted

a song of his entitled "The Swans of Balaka" [I Cigni de Balaka]. Jackson's legal team denied that their famous client's song "Will You Be There" off Jackson's "Dangerous" album had been influenced at all by Carrisi, claiming instead that both were inspired by a 1939 jazz piece by Lane & Baker, "Bless You (For Being An Angel)".

In 1994, Italian Judge Domenico Bonaccorsi had found Jackson guilty of the plagiarism charges, ruling in favor of Carrisi citing expert testimony by musicologist Luciano Chailly of the University of Cremona. Judge Bonaccorsi's finding of "musical identity" resulted in an injunction against the use and distribution of "Will You Be There".

On appeal by Jackson's lawyers, who loudly protested having a "judge absolutely incompetent in musical matters" decide the case, their "King of Pop" client prevailed in November of 1997. And after another appeal by Carrisi, the decision in favor of Jackson was upheld.

#### References

**End Profile ENTM-1999-MJ**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Bryony Lavery



**Profile:** ENTM-1998-BL  
**Name:** Bryony Lavery

**War on Plagiarism Threat Level:**

  
**Blue: Guarded Risk**

**Occupation:** Playwright, book author, artistic director, teacher of playwriting at Birmingham University

**Allegations:** Plagiarism in her Broadway play *Frozen*, incorporation of material from Malcolm Gladwell's article "Damaged" and Dorothy Lewis' book *Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity*

**Results:** Widely publicized plagiarism charges in the media, apparent reconciliation with authors whose works inspired *Frozen*

**Known for:** Writing numerous plays, producing radio and TV shows

**Overview:** British playwright Bryony Lavery's Broadway drama *Frozen* explored the mind of murderers and their victims portrayed by means of the interactions of a murderer with a criminal psychologist.

Apparently, Lavery incorporated elements of an article by Malcolm Gladwell and a book by psychiatrist Dorothy Otnow Lewis, whose years of research on serial killers and other violent criminals as reported in *Guilty by Reason of Insanity* served as a rich source of material for Lavery's *Frozen*.

Lavery's drama received a nomination for a Tony Award and was widely acclaimed by critics until reports of plagiarism began to surface. Lewis reported her sense of violation at the very facts of her life being appropriated for use in such a public setting: "The whole thing was right there . . . I was sitting at home reading the play, and I realized that it was I. I felt robbed and violated in some peculiar way. It was as if someone had stolen--I don't believe in the soul, but, if there was such a thing, it was as if someone had stolen my essence."

After looking into her legal options and also meeting with Lavery an apparent reconciliation was reached, Lewis observed "Yes, she had copied my work. But no one was asking why she had copied it, or what she had copied, or whether her copying served some larger purpose."

Gladwell concludes an analytical article in *The New Yorker* ("Something Borrowed") by questioning whether Lavery had intended to do wrong, and suggests that inspiration and reworking of material as Lavery has done in *Frozen* constitutes a legitimate use of authentic language in exploring themes such as forgiveness through the medium of drama.

#### References

**End Profile ENTM-1998-BL**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



---

## Madonna



**Profile:**

**ENTM-2004-MAD**

**Name:**

**Madonna**

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**



**Occupation:** Singer/performer

**Allegations:** Plagiarism in "Hollywood" music video; Madonna has also been successfully sued in a Belgian court by Salvatore Acquaviva for making unacknowledged use of his song 'Ma Vie Fout Le Camp' [My life is leading nowhere] in the song "Frozen"

**Results:** Out of court settlement payment of \$638,000 made to son of French photographer Guy Bourdin

**Known for:** Singing career, flaunting of sexuality

**Overview:** After copying ideas from the work of French photographer Guy Bourdin in her music video "Hollywood", Madonna settled out of court with Bourdin's son Samuel who had sued the performing artist for breach of copyright.

The out of court settlement amounted to \$638,000. Such appropriation, piracy, and outright plagiarism in the audio-visual world of MTV seems to be rather common. Music video plundering has been called "the dirty little secret of the music video industry" as early as the mid-1990s by experts such as Maria Demopoulos.

Demopoulos described what happens behind the scenes of a music video production set: "a director . . . will send an assistant out shopping for a couple hundred dollars worth of photography books and fashion magazines. The more arcane and obscure the better, because fewer viewers will recognize the source. Then, back at the chop shop--usually the director's office--the process of dismantling the photographic work of others begins . . . [with the] unspoken assumption that, if given the job, the director has permission to use these stolen images."

This "chop-shop" plagiarism factory mentality seems to explain the circumstances surrounding the plagiarism for which Madonna (and company) ended up paying a pretty hefty fine.

**The Acquaviva "Frozen" Case:** In another case of alleged plagiarism involving Madonna's song "Frozen", Belgian songwriter Salvatore Acquaviva has prevailed in court, resulting in an order to halt sales of Madonna's *Ray of Light* album. Acquaviva maintains that his song "Ma Vie Fout L'camp [My Life's Getting Nowhere]" had been plundered by the American pop-music icon ("Songwriter Wins Case Against Madonna" *Associated Press*).

Judge Xavier Hiernaux "perceived it as proven that Madonna had had access to the 'musical information' which made it possible for her to write 'Frozen'. Additionally he laid great weight on the particular argument put forward by the complainant, according to which in 1979 Madonna had stopped in the Northern Belgian district of Mouscron from which Acquaviva hails." Acquaviva's lawyer represented his client's desire to be reimbursed for the pilfered song: "She stole the song, therefore she must also pay for it" ("[Super Hit Appears Before The Law: Madonna's 'Frozen' is a Plagiarism](#)").

The decision will most likely be appealed, or perhaps even settled out of court as was the "Hollywood" case involving appropriation of Guy Bourdin's photographia erotica.

#### References

**End Profile ENTM-2004-MAD**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Deepa Mehta



**Profile:**

**ENTM-2004-DM**

**Name:**

**Deepa Mehta**

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:**

  
**Orange: High Risk**

**Occupation:** Canadian-based Indian screenwriter, camera assistant, and "Crossover filmmaker" (Indrani Roy Mitra, "Deepa Mehta to Settle Plagiarism Case")

**Allegations:** Stealing the work of Bengali novelist Sunil Gangopadhyay, borrowing material from his novel *Sei Somoy* ["*Those Days*"] for use in Mehta's film *Water*

**Results:** Lawsuit initiated by journalist Anuradha Dutta; Mehta agreed to settle with Gangopadhyay as well as his publisher and translator in November of 2005

**Known for:** Being a "crossover filmmaker" and would-be screenwriter including the film *Fire* and *Earth*; the film *Fire*'s portrayal of a lesbian relationship angered many Indian film-goers, and this outcry against *Fire* led to protests and even the destruction of a set for Mehta's *Water* film in the city of Varanasi: "2,000 protesters had stormed the ghats, destroying the main film set, burning and throwing it into the holy river. Protesters burnt effigies of Deepa Mehta, and threats to her life began" (Yuen-Carrucan, J. "The Politics of Deepa Mehta's *Water*"); known for "challeng[ing] blind tradition in India: 'I seriously wanted to break the stereotypes of India, the "exotic" India of the Raj and the princes and the mysticism. Exotic India doesn't really exist'" (from [Deepa Mehta biography](#))

**Overview:** Indrani Roy Mitra reports at [rediff.com](#) on the case of apparent plagiarism involving Bengali novelist Sunil Gangopadhyay and Canadian-based Indian "crossover filmmaker" Deepa Mehta.

According to Mitra, it was a journalist by the name of Anuradha Dutta who first discovered the "almost word-for-word resemblance between his [Gangopadhyay's] classic novel, *Sei Somoy*" and Mehta's film *Water*, a screenplay with a focus on the politics of religion and the plights of Indian widows who have been "foced to enter 'widow houses.' Labelled as worthless without a husband to measure themselves by, they struggle to survive by begging and often turn to prostitution . . ." (Yuen-carrucan, J.) Mehta's latest film was shown in August of 2005 at the Toronto International Film Festival where Mehta hoped to gain a wider audience for \*her\* screenwriting talent, substantively

bolstered it would seem by Gangopadhyay's creative talent as well.

After Dutta initiated a lawsuit in the Delhi High Court seeking damages for Gangopadhyay, his publisher, and his translator, Mehta indicated that she was "willing to settle".

Gangopadhyay was "relieved" at this development, even forgiving as he observed that "writers and filmmakers are but painters using different canvases" (Mitra, I. R. "Deepa Mehta to Settle Plagiarism Case").

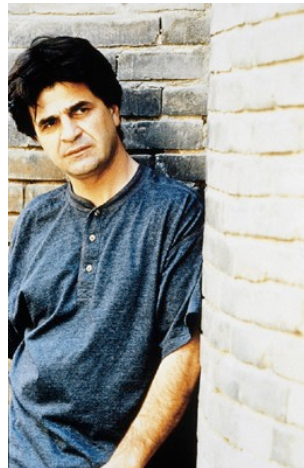
#### References

**End Profile ENTM-2004-DM**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Jafar Panahi



**Profile:** ENTM-2005-JP  
**Name:** Jafar Panahi

**War on Plagiarism Threat Level:**

  
**Blue: Guarded Risk**

**Occupation:** Iranian screenwriter, film director, and movie producer

**Allegations:** Film director Davud Tohidparast alleged in a lawsuit that Panahi had plagiarized the plot of the movie script "Shirin" for use in Panahi's new film "Offside"

**Results:** The Jury and Dispute Settlement Board for the Iranian House of Cinema acquitted Panahi of the plagiarism charges

**Known for:** Iranian cinematographer Jafar Panahi has won international film festival awards for works such as "The White Balloon"; he is also known for films such as "The Circle" and "Crimson Gold" which have never

been officially approved for theatres in Iran by the appropriate bureaucrats within Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance

**Overview:**

The Iranian screenwriter Jafar Panahi has been acquitted of plagiarism charges brought by film-making colleague Davud Tohidparast.

Tohidparast had alleged in a lawsuit that Panahi had appropriated the main plot of his film script "Shirin" for use in a new film production by Panahi to be entitled "Offside". The Jury and Dispute Settlement Board for the Iranian House of Cinema found that "No screenwriter, filmmaker, and essentially no one has monopoly on social themes" ("House of Cinema Acquits Panahi of Plagiarism", *MehrNews.com*).

For his part, Tohidparast maintains that the plot and theme borrowed by Panahi were his original ideas. After submitting the screenplay draft to the Supervisory and Assessment Office of Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the screenplay was rejected. Following this rejection, Panahi revised the draft, submitted the new screenplay for review to a Mr. Mohammadreza Mohammadi, who just so happens to be the film producer for Panahi's new screenplay ("Director Accuses Panahi of Plagiarism").

Tohidparast found that the main plot for his rejected screenplay was to serve as a source of inspiration for celebrated cinematographer Jafar Panahi. A case of usurpation by a more influential and well known screenwriter? This case is difficult to evaluate due to the levels of bureaucracy and government control surrounding and stifling the filmmaking industry in Iran. Quite possibly, the very process of jumping through the hoops needed to receive the official stamp of approval for a film's production contributed to the lifting of original ideas from Davud Tohidparast's "Shirin".

Who knows? Perhaps, somewhere along the chain of authority within Iran's Supervisory and Assessment Office of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance [*whew!*], a decision was made to allow one screenwriter to develop a theme at the expense of another screenwriter's original ideas.

Pretty sad to consider that Iran's best screenwriters have to get official permission to develop their ideas. Talk about constraints and limitations, the *circles* within which we are all--so to speak--entrapped. Just like the characters in Panahi's "The Circle". If he did lift Tohidparast's ideas, Panahi certainly didn't work too hard at expanding his own circle. In his own words, he might be guilty "because he didn't try to expand the radius of his circle." As Panahi commented in an interview with regard to his filmmaking career:

In all my films, you never see an evil character, male or female. I believe that everyone is a good person. It could be the result of social difficulties. Even the most dangerous criminal has that sense of humanity. At the bottom he's still a human. It doesn't mean that a criminal shouldn't be punished just because social difficulties have driven him to it. He's guilty because he didn't try to expand the radius of his circle

(Walsh, D. "An Interview with Jafar Panahi, director of *The Circle*" *World Socialist Web Site*)


References



## Naomi Shemer



**Profile:** ENTM-1967-NS  
**Name:** Naomi Shemer

**War on Plagiarism Threat Level:**  **Blue: Guarded Risk**  
**Occupation:** Israeli Songwriter and Composer

**Allegations:** Plagiarizing the melody of a Basque lullaby for the 1967 Six Day War anthem "Jerusalem of Gold" [Yerushalayim Shel Zahav]

**Results:** Angrily denied the allegations until a deathbed confession; Admitted to sub-conscious copying in a final letter to a friend and hinted that remorse and guilt were perhaps to blame for her terminal illness

**Known for:** Songs which "expressed an intense love for the country and for the people of Israel" (President Moshe Katsav; An Israel Prize laureate who "left us an immortal legacy of Hebrew works on which many generations of Israelis will be raised" (Education Minister Limor Livnat).

**Overview:** Israeli songwriter and composer Naomi Shemer denied for years that she had lifted the melody for *Jerusalem of Gold* [Yerushalayim Shel Zahav] from a Basque lullaby. That denial, and the accompanying guilt, may have contributed to the terminal cancer which took the life of Israel's beloved Naomi Shemer of gold.

"Jerusalem of Gold" became an unofficial anthem after and during the Israeli victory in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Arab east Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, came under Israeli control when the Arab armies of Syria, Egypt, and Jordan suffered a resounding defeat after threatening to annihilate the fledgling modern Jewish state. IDF (Israeli Defense Force) paratroopers sang portions of Shemer's "Jerusalem of Gold" during the battle of Jerusalem while capturing historically significant parts of the Old City (E. Shuman 2004).

"Jerusalem of Gold" seemed to be prophetic, and it became the symbol and the unofficial anthem celebrating the Jewish return to their ancient capital city after so many years of exile abroad. One stanza is a lamentation:

How the water cisterns have dried up  
The city square is empty  
Nobody goes up to the Temple Mount  
In the Old City  
And in the caves of the rocks  
Winds howl  
And no one goes down to the Dead Sea  
Upon the Jericho Road

But shortly later, the lamentation turns to  
exultation:

Jerusalem of gold...

We have returned to the water cisterns  
To the marketplace and the square  
A shofar calls out on the Temple Mount  
In the Old City

And in the caves in the rocks  
A thousand suns shine forth  
And again we will go down to the Dead Sea  
Upon the Jericho Road

[\(listen to the song\)](#)

It seems that Shemer had heard the tune for this song from a friend who sang the Basque lullaby "Pello Joxepe", a popular song in Basque country. In a letter from her deathbed to composer Gil Aldema, Shemer acknowledged her debt to this Basque melody. *Haaretz* newspaper printed portions of Shemer's deathbed confession in which the composer of this now immortal song wrote, "I consider the entire affair a regrettable work accident--so regrettable that it may be the reason for me taking ill."

Shemer confessed that she had heard a friend singing "Pello Joxepe" in 1967, and that she had subconsciously been influenced by the melody: "In the winter of 1967, when I was working on the writing of Jerusalem of Gold, the song must have crept into me unwittingly . . . I also didn't know an invisible hand dictated changes to the original . . . as though someone protected me and provided me with the eight notes that gave me the rights to my own version of the folk song."

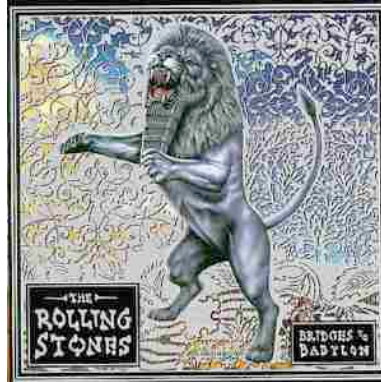
The Basque reaction was rather complacent--appreciative even that they were noticed: "Nobody's outraged here at the Basque Country. We are such a little nation . . . we feel proud anytime someone notices us for something good (a nice tune, for instance)."

[References](#)

**End Profile ENTM-1967-NS**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)

The  
Rolling  
Stones  
("Sir"  
Mick  
Jagger,  
Keith  
Richards)



Profile:

ENTM-1997-RS/MJ/KR

Name:

The Rolling Stones  
(Mick Jagger, Keith Richards)

War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat  
Level:

  
Yellow: Elevated Risk

Occupation: Legendary Rock Band

**Allegations:** In the midst of "lumber[ing] down a long slope of decline", Keith Richards and Mick Jagger pulled off a "direct rip-off of k.d. lang's hit song 'Constant Craving'" in the *Bridges to Babyon* album's "Anybody Seen My Baby?" (G. Arnold)

**Results:** Gave k.d. lang co-writing credits in order to avoid a lawsuit

**Known for:** After more than 40 years of rock-n-roll hits, the "Strolling Bones" were still touring and attracting fans to their concerts in nostalgic re-performances from their glory days of the 60s and 70s; "Sir" Mick Jagger was knighted by Queen Elizabeth for his rock-n-roll contributions

**Overview:**

The 60 year old plus members of the "Strolling Bones", as they are disparagingly referred to by critics of the aging rock band, were still on tour through the 1990s and through the first decade of the new millennium.

In a [review of the Stones' \*Bridges to Babylon\* album](#), Gina Arnold refers to it as "trivial and unpromising, a mere excuse for the much more lucrative act of touring". She doesn't stop there. It's also a "wretchedly underwritten, go-through-the-motions album . . . [in which] [a]s on their last, oh, seven albums, the Stones tend to eke out one simple groove and then add some meaningless lyric for Jagger to repeat ad infinitum" ("A Tale of Two Bands").

According to Arnold, the album also features a

"direct rip-off of k.d. lang's hit song 'Constant Craving'--so much so that the Glimmer Twins . . . had to give her co-writing credits rather than face a plagiarism lawsuit". *Bridges to Babylon's* "Anybody Seen My Baby?" is the song in question, without a doubt influenced by "Constant Craving".

Arnold contrasts the Stones' ongoing legacy with that of another band, *The Replacements*, and laments the fact that a band with so much more potential and spirit than the Stones has come to an end while the spirit "of the Rolling Stones--ugly, lecherous and old" continues to live on. And she asks, "What does that say about modern life?"

*Strolling Bones*. What an image! Without life, without spirit. Plagiarists lack the true animation and inspiration of an Author; they go through the motions of an Author, seeming to possess life, while consisting of little more than animated, lifeless, *strolling bones*.

References

End Profile ENTM-1997-RS/MJ/KR

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



Britney  
Spears/BMG  
Publishing,  
Inc



Profile:

ENTM-2005-BS

Name:

Britney Spears

War on  
Plagiarism



Threat Level:

Occupation:      Pop-star diva

Allegations:      Plagiarism of the song "Sometimes" by Steve Wallace

Results:            Wallace has sued Britney Spears and Sony/BMG Music Publishing Inc.; Songwriter Steve Wallace who used a "poor man's copyright" for his song "Sometimes" has been offered a sweet deal by Music-Reg.com, free online registration of his songs for life

Known for:        Pop-Music hits and occasional lip-synching

Overview:           On May 5, 2005, songwriter Steve Wallace filed suit in federal court alleging copyright infringement by Britney Spears and Sony/BMG Music Publishing, Inc (J.L. Magana, "Ind. songwriter sues Spears over copyright").

Wallace alleges that he is the author of the song "Sometimes" which has appeared on Spears' albums *Baby One More Time* and *Greatest Hits: My Prerogative*. Wallace has submitted evidence in the form of parallel lyrics comparing his version of "Sometimes" with Spears' version, and it is reported that the versions are virtually identical.

Although Wallace did not officially copyright his song until 2003, he had taken out what is referred to as the "poor man's copyright", namely, mailing a copy of one's work to oneself in a sealed envelope in order to prove the date of origination of a creative work and/or authorship of intellectual property.

It will be interesting to see how the court views poor man Steve Wallace's claims to copyright protection without having officially registered his work with the Copyright Office. Technically, copyright applies from the moment a work was created, so at this point the law would seem to be on Wallace's side provided the evidence is deemed to be valid.

After hearing about poor man Steve Wallace's plight, Music-Reg.com has offered the artist a sweet deal, free online registration of his songs for life (Emediawire.com, "Musician Who Accused Britney Spears of Plagiarism Offered Free Lifetime Registration of Music").

[References](#)

**End Profile ENTM-2005-BS**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



## Bruce Springsteen



**Profile:**

**ENTM-2002-BS**

**Name:**

**Bruce Springsteen**

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat Level:**

  
**Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** Singer and Songwriter

**Allegations:** Ripping off a tune from musician Sam Cooke without acknowledgement, "homage", "tribute", or indebtedness

**Results:** Listeners and critics have commented on the similarities

**Known for:** The "Boss" is known for rock & roll tunes with popular appeal and Top 10 listings

**Overview:** In *Entertainment Weekly*, Tom Sinclair pointed out the resemblance of Bruce Springsteen's "Mary's Place" to a song written by Sam Cooke in 1964, "Meet Me at Mary's Place."

The choruses of the two songs are virtually identical:

**Springsteen:**

Meet me at Mary's place  
We're gonna have a party . . .

**Cooke:**

Meet me at Mary's place  
We're gonna have us a ball today . . .

As Sinclair observes, there are differences in aspects of performance and vocalization, but the influence is unmistakable. In an interview with Sinclair, Andrew Massimino suggests that the idea of "having this party probably made Bruce start thinking about those old party records that he listens to, and that Sam Cooke record in particular."

This may also be an instance of subconscious derivation, or *cryptomnesia*, although it does seem somewhat out of the ordinary for a conscientious artist such as Springsteen to claim credit for a song so close to the Cooke original.

As *referencing*, *byting*, *sampling* and other forms of "homage" go in the world of pop-music, acknowledgement of influence is not always as straightforward as in other genres of discourse. But if a musician claims to have written a particular song, and has really just swiped it from another musician, then we're probably talking about a "lunchbox special" deal, something which the Boss usually tries to prevent his workers from doing [i.e. swiping company property and taking it home in a lunchbox].

**Update:** It seems that there is more to this story than just Springsteen borrowing from Sam Cooke. Allen Levine has pointed out to me (current author) in an email note ("Plagiarism Once Removed") that Sam Cooke seems to have been influenced by Johnny Morisette's song "Meet Me at the Twisting Place". As listed at [songsofsamcooke.com](http://songsofsamcooke.com), Sam Cook produced a song for Johnny Morisette, and as Allen Levine indicated, "I'd love to know what they discussed [on January 21, 1964]. Unfortunately, Johnny Morisette is no household name. His uncredited work lives on in the legacy of two stars who are."

[References](#)

**End Profile ENTM-2002-BS**

[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)

Jean-  
Claude  
Van  
Damme



**Profile:**

ENTM-2001-JCVD

**Name:**

Jean-Claude Van Damme

**War on  
Plagiarism  
Threat Level:**

 **Yellow: Elevated Risk**

**Occupation:** Screenwriter, action movie star, and film director

**Allegations:** Film idea and title for "Replicant" stolen from Sara J. Stratso who holds a 1996 copyright for a film by the same name

**Results:** Stratso sued Van Damme as well as Artisan Entertainment and movie distributors (Blockbuster Entertainment, Musicland Group, Netflix, Amazon.com, NBC Universal, Yaletown Entertainment Corp.)

**Known for:** Film industry successes and falterings as well

**Overview:**

The *Texarkana Gazette* reports that screenwriter Sara J. Stratso has sued Jean-Claude Van Damme, Artisan Entertainment, and a number of movie distributors for lifting her copyrighted 1996 screenplay "Replicant".

Stratso believes that her movie script was plagiarized by Van Damme and Artisan Entertainment in the production of a film by the same name, and her contention is that "The two works are sufficiently similar that copying is obvious and willful" (McDermott, L. B. "Companies reply to lawsuit involving script plagiarism").

"Replicant" has apparently replicated.

[References](#)

**End Profile ENTM-2001-JCVD**

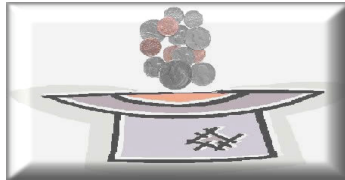
[Top of page](#)   [Home](#)   [Index of plagiarists](#)   [Search](#)



Google Search

Search WWW  Search

famousplagiarists.com



[Make a Donation](#)

Found something useful at this site? Want to see the public naming/databasing of plagiarists continue? Please consider dropping a bit of spare change in the hat via secure PayPal in support of the Famous Plagiarists Research Project (web hosting, database management, ongoing research).

Luc Besson

"Bollywood" and Sahara TV

Michael Bolton

Bob Dylan

John Fogarty

George Harrison

Michael Jackson: Just Beat Those Plagiarism (and Pedophilia) Charges

Bryony Lavery

Eddie Murphy

Steven Spielberg

[back to top](#)

**Disclaimer:** All of the famous plagiarists featured in this webspace remain "alleged plagiarists", the documented allegations having been made by others in the professional literature and/or the popular media. Further details relating to these allegations will be forthcoming in the book edition of Famous Plagiarists. Although Dr. Lesko is a professor at Saginaw Valley State University, the Famous Plagiarists Research Project represents the individual research of John P. Lesko, plagiarologist, and SVSU accepts no responsibility for the content of these pages. Comments or questions should be directed to

[jplesko@svsu.edu](mailto:jplesko@svsu.edu)

[News](#)

[Home](#)

[Links](#)

[References](#)

[Quotations](#)

**swiftly realized.**

Copyright 2004-2006 Famous Plagiarists.com / War On Plagiarism.org. Some Rights Reserved. Contact:



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivs 2.5 License).