A Gripping Tale of Plagiarism

A Law Weekly Correspondent
Discovers Her Work Seemingly Stolen by a Legal Pundit
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Staff Editor

Last April, a political pundit had a publicity firm publish his personal and a Q&A on a flash-promotional website. Yet the interview, meant to establish the pundit’s expertise, was filled with words that weren’t his own.

It took nearly nine months before I noticed that the pundit, a self-identified “influencer” and legal scholar, had plagiarized my work. His plagiarism wasn’t slight—a full paragraph of an article I wrote for the nonprofit GreatSchools appeared verbatim as one of his answers to the Q & A. Since he wanted to use my words instead of his, maybe I should have been flattered. But I wasn’t.

The man who used my words, Christopher Metzler, makes relatively frequent appearances on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. He has taught at Georgetown and Cornell. Although he is a self-proclaimed legal scholar, with degrees from Oxford, Columbia, and the University of Aberdeen, he seems to hold little regard for copyright law. His disregard, however, may be tactical: Would any news editor really notice that I was using my own legal education for something so slight as a stolen paragraph? And, with so many journalists online, would anyone even notice his theft?

We have so little control over what we publish that when I noticed Metzler’s plagiarism, I wasn’t really surprised. I’ve seen my journalistic articles reprinted without permission in newsletters and online, and I once found a picture from my Facebook page published on the website of a literary magazine.

But this was different. The more I learned about Metzler, the more I became intrigued by the irony of his blatant disregard of ethics despite his legal background, and the apparent ease with which he plundered words. I decided to research plagiarism by chance, a quick Google search revealed that I was not the only one who used his words. He used the same Q & A, two paragraphs of a separate response were taken verbatim from an article on Vox.

Metzler’s career as a pundit expanded as many topics as possible. Establishing expertise can derive from taking others’ work. Establishing expertise can derive from taking others’ work.

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The Malicious Chinchilla: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Exotic Varmints

Part One of ?

On a blustery Tuesday in March of 2014, I was returning to my under
dergraduate campus from a quick trip to Joe’s Canal’s Discount Liquor Outlet, where I had noticed a strip mall PetSmart on the side of the highway. I can’t explain with any certainty why I decided to investigate. My university had a rather strict policy on pets, meaning that the purchase of anything but a fish would lead to unnecessary “complications” in my living situation. Fish give me the heebie-jeebies. But getting a university-approved pet was off the table. I suppose, if anything, it was a way to keep my mind off the paperwork I signed saying I was responsible for all the chinchillas bought in a PetSmart [in state redacted]. I observed a pair of “Fancy Rats” that were engaged in some decidedly non-fancy activities, a guinea pig with a lazy eye, and a hamster that looked like it hung out at truck stops to pick fights for fun. Above their heads was a bright neon sign, “CHINCHILLAS,” an opaque plastic enclosure, was home to an array of critters held in for a day, I was tempted to ask about the chinchilla. I’d never been more surprised to learn that the chinchilla I’d ever seen. Glim"er black eyes looked me up and down searchingly. I felt a sudden chill in the air and shiver. The chinchilla seemed to march up something and, instead of retreating inside its lair, hopped to the side of the road, glanced at me and pressed a paw against the glass wall. In retrospect, this was clearly a calculated ploy to tug at my heartstrings—but hey, it worked, and I’ve got to respect the hustle. At point, a helpful PetSmart employee (who was also a chinchilla) approached and inquired as to whether I was “interested in the chinchilla.” He (the rodent, not Dennis) continued to stare, evaluating me like a dad who’s probably going to be disappointed in your life choices.

I weighed the options presented by my spontaneous foray into the pet store. Should I follow the time-honored tradition of the esteemed institution of higher learning that I attended, or allow myself to fall under the vagueness unnerveing stare of an odd-looking but cute rodent? I’d just bought a chinchilla. The title probably spoiled that one for you.

The licensing fee was pretty cheap, considering that the paperwork I signed said “Critical Animal Dance” in large print (I skipped reading the rest of it, as one does). “World, I didn’t think you were so edgy! I can say that. After purchasing a cage, food, and the necessary paperwork, I left the store a proud new pet owner. The only thing I knew about the cause was that it was apparently now in charge of the survival of the species. Either Dennis is quite the salesman or I’m easily manipulated by
Tidying Up With Marie Kondo: The LW Review

At the risk of sparking controversy, I’m going to admit that I spent a decent chunk of my winter break watching Marie Kondo. I did it for a few reasons:

- I organize other people’s houses.
- And then another chunk of time was spent organizing my own. I only got as far as my bedroom, but it is satisfyingly tidy at the moment. I won’t attempt to explain all the reasons Marie Kondo is controversial, though the vast majority of criticism I’ve seen relates to her helping people with their clothes.

My initial reaction to her show was that I love her, and her enthusiasm is, I think, the fact that she seems to cherish her clients and their spaces. I can only hope I’ll feel as good about being a lawyer as she does about being a tidying expert.

My other reaction was that the producers did an admirable job of selecting diverse clients and households. Too many shows feature many clients that I found actually likeable, though, and I began to wonder if the ratings were eye-rolling counts as evidence. Marie loves them all, bless her, and she is the only one who is actually kept watching. She is soothing in both voice and manner, and her approach of methodically sorting through all that mess I imagine that someday I, too, might like people.

A great chunk of each episode is related to reducing the amount of clothing the clients own. Marie believes they own more than they need. For the only person I know reading who doesn’t know already, a brief summary: You pile everything in one place, hold each piece, and decide if it sparks joy. If you do, you keep it, and if it doesn’t, you thank it and give it away. But the really son reading who doesn’t know already, a brief summary: You pile everything in one place, hold each piece, and decide if it sparks joy. If you do, you keep it, and if it doesn’t, you thank it and give it away. But the really

TV Guide: Just Watch Riverdale

This article was originally going to thoughtfully recommend to you a well-balanced diet of television shows you hadn’t the time to find for yourself. I was going to spare you future indecision paralysis with some lesser-known comedies (Alpha House, People of Earth, Borderline), shows featuring badass women (The Bletchley Circle, Call the Midwife, Insecure), which Netflix stand-up comedy collections to watch (all of The Stand-Ups, but especially Aparna Nancherla; see me after), and shows featuring how an American flapper (Lady Be Good) and Mrs. Weasley, but a priest now (Father Brown) are coping with the 21st century orders rates in their communities. But then it came to my attention that not nearly enough of you are watching the CW show Riverdale. Let me tell you—within mild spoilers—you why must read.

Reason #1: PP Jones

You know what really shakes up a semester to an infuriating start? A good iden
tity crisis: You know who isn’t going to get you there? The absurd attrac
tiveness of Billy from the movie Billy Madison is rising to be a good parent while co
carrying a gang with his son, played by Cole Sprouse from The Suite Life of Zack & Cody (a documentary on the perils

of homeschooling millennials in the age of Airbnb).

Actor Skeet Ulrich’s character, Forsythe Pendleton Jones II (“FP” for short), has the name of an eighteenth century watch hunter and the leather jacket of a motorcycle gang member who shops at H&M. Second only to Fred Andrews, he is ironically one of the most normal parents on this show. I know what those of you who actually watch Riverdale are thinking—but basically, it’s more like a support for those “I’m a bagger isn’t he? the fact that it is a life you can’t choose the inane roulette of

barrel.

Reason #2: The names

Riverdale is meant to be a mashup of classic characters from the Archie Comics. As a direct result, the names on this show are ridiculous. The entire Jones family leads the pack in this category of “Unfortunate Names with Which to Attend High School,” with father Forsythe Pendleton II, son Jughead, and daughter Jellybean. But also featured on Riverdale are such gems as Sweet Pea, Papa Poutine (who has a son named “Small Fry”), Fanga (not a dog), Hot Dog (is a dog), and Tall Boy (not a beer). Nothing elevates a CW drama to an artform quite like the line “It’s the Ghoulsies, Jughead! Those bastards have Hot Dog!”

Reason #3: General intrigue

It’s important to have topics of conversation on hand that are unrelated to law and politics, and BOY can Riverdale fill this void in your life. Nothing to chat about between government shut
downs and professor jokes anymore. For me, any decision the character Archie has ever made on this show and start there. So, no season on Riverdale would be complete without a series of awful judgment calls by this guy. My theory is that he might make better decisions if he hadn’t spent his entire life in a town lying to him about his natural hair color. If Archie’s one man arc isn’t for you, don’t worry! CW’s hottest show has everything: An heiress to a maple syrup dyna
asty who shoots arrows for no reason, a cheerleading captain who doesn’t speak a word of English, a seventeen-year-old, and a parent

run brother so haphazardly thrown in among the other insane things happening in this town that you will regularly forget about it.

Reason #4: Dungeons and Dragons

Season Three of this emotional rollercoaster sees the introduction of the gang known as the Gargoyles,” a reimagining of the game Dungeons and Dragons. They play games, a drug-dealing conspiracy, and a Breakast Club-fla

vored Foods with a punk edge. Little more can be said on
Class of 2021 v. Davies
918 U.Va. 34 (2019)

VanderMeulen, C. J., delivered the opinion of the Court, in which Schmalz and Jani J.J., joined, Jani, J., filed a concurring opinion, Horner, J., filed an opinion concurring in the judgment, in which Mal- ken, J.J., joined.

Chief Justice VanderMeulen delivered the opinion of the Court.

"Cookies and coffee are the birthright of every student of this law." This maxim, as old as the petty common law itself, is alternatively attributed to Lord Blackstone, Chief Justice Haden, and Lisa. Whatever its origin, it is the north star of this Court’s cookie-and-coffee jurisprudence, which must today examine whether the end of the free WB coffee constitutes a deprivation of the 1Ls’ right to due process.

Members of the UVA Law Class of 2021 v. Davies (hereinafter “VanderMeulen”) is a case as a class action. In their complaint before the Court of Petty Appeals, plaintiffs alleged the facts as follows: Beginning in August of 2018, the Law School administration’s decision (represented in this suit by Dean Sarah Davies) began setting off a “deal of notoriety” and quality” alongside real half-and-half and warm cookies on Fridays around 11:30 a.m. This program of coffee and cookie extras was especially for the 1Ls, who were “the first to be scavenge for coffee elsewhere in the Law School.”

Class-past-11:30-on-Fridays was altered. Instead of looking down at your notes and complaining loudly when they were late, oh yes. And we do not renounce Blackstone’s/Chief Justice Haden’s/Lisa’s famous maxim. Coffee—albeit of far inferior quality and accompanied by woefully inadequate “cream”—may be found throughout the Law School.

But we invoke the Doctrine of Crotchetiness in denying plaintiffs’ claim. See, e.g., Abraham v. Kordana, 711 U.Va. 307 (1997) (“No, Kevin, that is where I sit.”)). We members of the Classes of 2019 and 2020 have one of this no-class-past-11:30-on-Fridays business, much less cookies and coffee. This panem pucks can suffer through less-than-satisfactory library coffee and the horror of powdered cream like the rest of us. It builds character, like the look of disappointment in Profesor Ferran’s eyes during a cold call, or the realization that, “Oh no you did not.” We, if you are, the Kennedy people will send us another.”

In light of this consistent jurisprudence, we have little difficulty in holding that plaintiffs have failed to make out a claim for deprivation of due process. They have not suffered the sort of “irreparable loss” this Court requires to earn damages or an injunction against the administration. We concede that the coffee and real, honest half-and-half, “while sublime” was especially for the 1Ls, but was also enjoyed by a phalanx of people. Nevertheless, plaintiffs are entitled. She “collects stories and anecdotal expressions that students should ‘really consider reading the cases more closely’ and ‘stop listening to Doran about how to pronounce ‘brooch.’” Plaintiffs filed a timely appeal.

Plaintiffs allege that the Law School administration is removing the coffee and coffee extravaganzas with the souring violates their right to due process under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. They seek a return of the coffee and damages for last week’s shocks. Presiding at the Court of Petty Claims, Judge Ferran ruled “in favor of Dean Davies’s position to dismiss, declaring that good coffee and real, honest half-and-half cookie sublime” was not “something to which plaintiffs are entitled.” She added—tangentially but characteristic—that students should “really consider reading the cases more closely” and “stop listening to Doran about how to pronounce ‘brooch.’”

plaintiffs have failed to make out a claim of depriving due process under the Fifth and Sixth Amendments.”

The Court of Petty Appeals is the highest appellate jurisdiction court at UVA Law. The Court has the power to review any and all decisions, conflicts, and disputes that may arise, either directly, indirectly, or tangentially, the Law School or its students. The Court comprises four associate justices, which include Chief Justice. Opinions shall be released periodically and only in the official court reporter: the Virginia Law Weekly. Please email a brief summary of any and all conflicts to jmv5af@virginia.edu.
We want to dismiss the notion of being silly as losing access to coffee. At Darden, we do mature Darden things that matters. The start-up went through an idea that we should be able to use in a Darden setting. The purest on earth. They descended beneath the surface. The craggy bare-rock walls, the Silfra fissure, the American and Eurasian tectonic plates. The glacial water is the clearest in the world, and at its narrowest point, it is possible to almost touch the two continental plates on either side. The tour is available year-round; however, there is one catch for those who don’t have it. The Silfra fissure is located on the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates and is deemed a UNESCO world heritage site. The water temperature of the water varies throughout the year, and the temperature of the water remains steady at approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit as the waters originate from a glacier. Despite the cold, snorkeling in Iceland should be an adventure one should experience at least once in their life.
PLAGIARISM  
continued from page 1

What I wrote:  
The latest trends in school violence prevention

Both Cornell and Englebard recommend that schools and communities pursue programs focused on students’ mental wellness. Innovative approaches across the country include Virginia’s Threat assessment program, which was mandated statewide in 2013 to proactively resolve student threats before violent acts occur. Threat assessment programs aim to keep schools safe while addressing underlying issues and helping troubled students. In Utah, a state-wide crisis tip line that’s accessible through an app provides students access to crisis counselors and a confidential means of reporting bullying, violence, and threats. Across the country, educational experts are encouraging schools to teach local and emotional skills and provide access to in-school counseling and support.

What he “said.”

What do you believe is the best solution for the gun violence situation in America?

Dr. Metzler: Innovative approaches across the country include Virginia’s Threat assessment program, which was mandated statewide in 2013 to proactively resolve student threats before violent acts occur. Threat assessment programs aim to keep schools safe while addressing underlying issues and helping troubled students. In Utah, a state-wide crisis tip line that’s accessible through an app provides students access to crisis counselors and a confidential means of reporting bullying, violence, and threats. Across the country, educational experts are encouraging schools to teach local and emotional skills and provide access to in-school counseling and support.

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HOT BENCH  
continued from page 5

much thing as too much of a good thing.

I think you can definitely have too many carrots.

No! I can eat an entire bag of baby carrots...is that weird?

No, that’s not too weird. Yea, so half the bag I’ll eat with hummus and then the other half I’ll eat with peanut butter.

Were your parents set on your becoming a doctor?

Set. More like hanging around me. Lawyers rank far below doctors in my parents’ eyes, but they eventually came around!

What is your favorite place in Charlotteville?

Ridge Road. It’s right off of Garth and it’s a four-mile dirt road that I run regularly. It’s all horse farms and big estates. The second-tier goal of my running is to come across a kindly old man who will adopt me and leave me his horse farm. It’s farfetched but it could happen.

Deepest, darkest fear?

Having negative impact on the people I care the most about around me.

Pet peeve?

When somebody, over email, gets the Mr. or Mrs. wrong. We live in the Internet Age, look it up! (Also, when people try to talk to me when I have my headphones on. I’ve deployed the universal sign of leave me alone, people!!)

What’s a movie that left an impression on you?

My Cousin Vinny

Favorite word?

Serendipity.

Favorite food?

Peanut Butter.

I’m scared to ask, but what else do you eat with peanut butter?

What don’t I eat with peanut butter? It’s a versatile food that can be eaten with everything. Well, maybe notcape-

SUDOKU

Solution

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9 3 6 2 5 7 1 8 4

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7 5 1 4 9 2 6 8 3

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Puzzle 2 (Very hard, difficulty rating 0.77)