

Cases of Historical Interest In the Southern District of New York

Bright Tunes Music Corp. v. Harrisongs Music, Ltd. (George Harrison’s “My Sweet Lord”)

Judge Richard Owen

In 1970, shortly after the break-up of The Beatles, George Harrison, one of its members, penned a hit song titled “My Sweet Lord.” Ronald Mack, a composer, sued Harrison for copyright infringement, claiming that Harrison copied the music for “My Sweet Lord” from Mack’s “He’s So Fine.” “He’s So Fine” was recorded in 1962 by The Chiffons and had been widely played, reaching No. 1 on the Billboard charts for five weeks in the United States. After a bench trial, at which both songs were played by a pianist, Judge Owen found that, though it may not have been deliberate, Harrison had plagiarized “He’s So Fine” in creating “My Sweet Lord.” Judge Owen’s copyright finding was affirmed by the Second Circuit.

420 F. Supp. 177 (S.D.N.Y. 1976)



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