

Dear All,

Firstly, we have - hand-on-heart - never seen Mr. Trevor's video before.

As we all know, when a label wants to commission a video, a Video Commissioner identifies a group of sympathetic directors and sends them all the music. The directors listen to it, and then write down their ideas.

The Video Commissioner decides on the best idea and shows it to the band. If they like it too, the record label gives the director some money to bring their idea to life.

Bands rarely have anything to do with creating the ideas for their music videos. They don't design their record covers either. They're musicians, not designers, or painters.

The "Strawberry Swing" video for Coldplay was entirely conceived by Shynola.

It was our little story: superhero saves damsel in distress. Not exactly ground breaking - a universal story - Sleeping Beauty, Flash Gordon, Orpheus and Eurydice, even Donkey Kong. It's all about the detail of the trials and the tension of whether she is saved in time.

Equally, the technique of 'top down' films and animations in chalk has been done countless times before. We ourselves were inspired by a section of Peter Gabriel's Sledgehammer video.

Our original, rejected pitch featured child-like crayon drawings. Asked to include actors, we combined our idea with inspiring photographs by Jan Von Holleben.



We also liked and included this photograph by Abelardo Morell.



The basic treatment of our pitch was: person lying down, with animated chalk backgrounds to make them fly. We wanted to take these photographic ideas and make them move to tell a story.

Regarding the accusing pictures Mr. Gallagher has sent (we'll refer to them numerically)

1) Flying through the air. We believe Siegel and Shuster, creators of Superman, have probably the best stake in the claim for copyright on this one. We thought that if our superhero character was going to fly through the air we would, err, draw clouds.



2) Crawling under the earth. This is not a new idea either. When we wrote this we were specifically thinking of an episode of The Simpsons where the camera travelled underground to find the Indian god Vishnu operating the earth.



3) Question mark as a iconic sign for an idea. This is standard comic language, from a million and one comics, probably seen first in Felix the Cat.



4) Falling shot. In our opinion these two don't even look the same. However, in the name of honesty, this composition and the fight with the Squirrel was based on this cool still from a SuperMan console game.



If someone who is flying being suddenly made to drop is an idea of theirs we are plagiarising, I imagine we may have to exhume Chuck Jones to get his opinion on the matter.

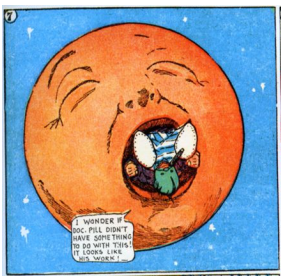


5) Dustbin lid/Umbrella prop. Again, we liked how Jan Von Holleben used regular household items for surreal uses. We also used an oar and a telescope.





If anything, our main reference for the video was Windsor McCay. Both in terms of design, and in terms of the dreamlike weirdness. You can clearly see the influence in these scans.



Other influences were Miyazaki's test for Little Nemo, Ray Harryhausen, Star Wars, 2001 and countless others, both consciously and subconsciously. Having never seen Mr. Trevor's video before, we can categorically deny that his video was any influence on our video. Any similarities are purely coincidental.

It is easy to find similarities between two pieces of work like this. When we were writing our pitch and thinking about how we could use the chalk, our favourite piece we found on YouTube was this from 2008:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv19oZU1fts>

Looking back, it has enough similarities to Mr. Trevor's video itself.

Real hand on chalk mixing slider:



Real foot on chalk guitar pedal:



Real hand strumming chalk strings:



Real hand hitting a chalk drum:



A chalk graphic equaliser:



Even a bit where he rubs out the chalk drawing:



We are not suggesting that Mr. Trevor's video is plagiarism.

Rather, this is to show how easy it is to make a convincing case by pointing out ONLY the similarities side-by-side.

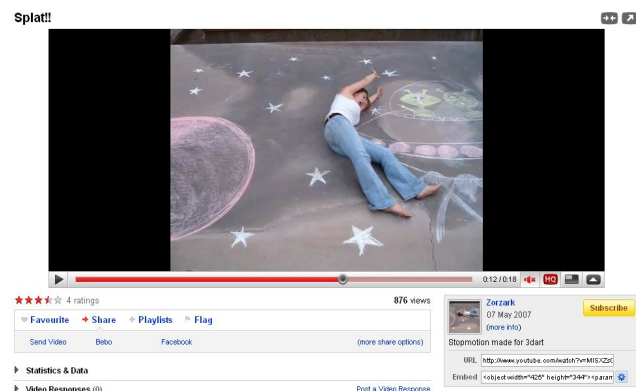
We have used no guitars, instruments, performance, UFOs, walls or interiors.

Likewise they have used no sea, damsel, squirrel, skeletons, romance or story.

It may have been unsupportable hyperbole from Coldplay to claim that our video was groundbreaking.

But it is NOT plagiarism.

And Mr. Trevor's video is NOT groundbreaking either.



This quote from Chris (Shynola) in an interview with motionographer sums it up:

<http://motionographer.com/theater/shynola-coldplay-strawberry-swing/>

Motionographer: **Technically speaking, this has been done before (Adele's "Chasing Pavements" and Oren Larvie's "Her Morning Elegance" music videos), but you guys managed to push it to create something that's astounding. Can you share with us how you guys managed to achieve such a feat?**

Chris: "We're aware of those videos, and I don't wish to denigrate them, but we thought there was more mileage in the technique than they had explored. We never claim to be original, just rigorous. So we wrote a story we thought would be entertaining and went about making it. It was a lot of hard work."

In summary, a video is commissioned on behalf of a band and the author is the Director, not the band.

The "Strawberry Swing" video for Coldplay was entirely conceived by Shynola.

Creativity involves the constant absorption and spitting-out of influences. However, we never copy.

Hope this clarifies things,  
Kenny, Chris and Jason  
(Shynola)

"if artists start accusing each other of plagiarism over music videos, where will it all end? Bands suing each other for concert effects like pyro, lights and fog?" - [pollstar.com](http://pollstar.com)