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Oops!

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Dear Sir,

Regarding your *Geeks in Toyland* article in the February 2006 edition of *Wired*, I would just like to congratulate you regarding the cack-handed manner in which you shamelessly plagiarised my own artwork for your editorial cover.

I refer to the double page spread on pages 104 -105 depicting a close-up of a lego 'minifig' head, which is self evidently stolen from my company *Spite Your Face Productions* well publicised promotional image for their film *ONE: A Space Odyssey*.

Imitation, they say, is the sincerest form of flattery, and I would quietly pursue that line of response, were the application not so clumsy and the circumstances not so dubious. You could, in your defence, suggest that any similarity between the images is purely coincidental. Two possible responses to this come to mind, each of which decimate that argument with equal veracity. One is:

Come off it!

...the other is as follows:

I produced the original image as promotional material for our film *One: A Space Odyssey*, a spoof of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and as such the image is modelled on the famous close-up of the 'Dave Bowman' character that was used in much of that films promotion.

Spite Your Face have produced a number of lego animated spoofs for leading clients like SONY and Lucasfilm, so recreating a *2001* promotional image in lego was par of the course for us – outside of this context however, it might be considered something of a leap of logic. I mean, there was nothing in the article which particularly related to *2001* except a general theme of robots, in which case surely a lego *Hal 9000* would have been the sensible choice? To decide upon a lego

image of Dave Bowman, is just one degree of separation too many. The crime, in short, is made conspicuous by its own lack of internal logic.

Now, let us consider the source. I'm pleased to say that *Spite Your Face* films continuously receive extensive media coverage, and that the particular image in question has been published (with permission) in several leading magazines and on countless websites. Further to this, the same image is also amongst the first (or very first) to appear if you type such vague searches as 'lego face', 'lego 2001', or 'lego dave' into Google. So, in short, it's not such a hard image to find, considering the particulars of the subject matter – and is probably the first image one would discover if you had made the decision to search out a lego 2001 image.

This is not, in fact, the first time that said image has been stolen without permission - but in the past, the various DJ's and club promoters who have appropriated it for their flyers and such, have always had the common decency just to steal the original. Not to *rip it off!* So let us consider the details of this bootlegging.

In the *Spite Your Face* image, we took the initiative of using the classic 1970s lego space helmets; because we thought they were more iconic than the modern helmets and closer resemble the ones in the original film. In *your* image, you have used the modern helmet (fair enough) but more peculiarly you have also chosen to use a retail minifig head wearing what clearly represents a racing driver's balaclava. I mean, why would you even *do* that? It detracts from the iconic image of the lego face, which is surely the intended focal point of *both* images, but also makes the visual similarity to *2001* extremely tenuous. Could you mix your metaphors any *more*? The only rationale you could possibly have for making that decision is if you were intentionally trying to differentiate your image from mine. That is, to cover your ass.

Also, the reflections in the helmet are really badly applied.

I don't presume to know who specifically created the image in question for *Wired* (I gather it was either article photographer Theo Barth or cover photographer Dwight Eschliman) nor do I presume to know whether they engaged in this act of plagiarism of their own volition or at your particular request. I'm not even certain whether the *2001: A Space Odyssey* connection has been previously understood, or whether your editorial staff just received the image and went "That looks cool, whatever it is". But somewhere down the line, be it misconduct or incompetence, someone has been very very naughty indeed.

It is worth mentioning that I myself produced a cover image and editorial spread featuring lego photography for *Digital Creative Arts* magazine not 6 months ago - so not only are you trailing behind your competitors, but if you had wanted a recreation of my own artwork, you could have just bloody well asked!

So are you going to apologise then or what?

Yours sincerely,

Tony Mines

P.S. The article was very interesting.