

Harvard Plagiarism Archive

News summaries and occasional commentary on the plagiarism charges made against Harvard scholars since 2002. Write us with tips and comments via e-mail at AuthorSkeptics@hotmail.com, or via our anonymous comment feature at <http://HPATips.blogspot.com>.

"[T]he problem of writers . . . passing off the work of others as their own . . . [is] a phenomenon of some significance."
PROFESSOR LAURENCE TRIBE, e-mail to Dean Lawrence Velvel of 9/13/04

"I . . . delegated too much responsibility to others . . .,' [Ogletree] said. 'I was negligent in not overseeing more carefully the final product that carries my name.' * * * Ogletree told The Crimson that he had not read the passage of Balkin's book that appears in his own work. An assistant inserted the material into a manuscript But Ogletree said he was closely involved in most of the drafting of the book"
STEVEN MARKS, "Ogletree Faces Discipline for Copying Text," The Harvard Crimson, 9/13/04

"Ronald Klain . . . then only a first-year student at Harvard law . . . spent most of his time with Tribe working on Tribe's [1985] book God Save This Honorable Court," the Legal Times added in 1993. * * * 'Many of Klain's friends and former colleagues say that he wrote large sections of the book"
JOSEPH BOTTUM, "The Big Mahatma," The Weekly Standard, 10/4/04

"[W]hat I did 20 years ago was a significant lapse in proper academic practice"
PROFESSOR LAURENCE TRIBE, official statement on his book, God Save This Honorable Court, 4/13/05

About Me

Saturday, September 25, 2004

PROFESSOR ALAN DERSHOWITZ

(This is the summary of the Dershowitz plagiarism story contained in our e-mail of September 16, 2004, slightly edited in response to helpful suggestions from a professor who commented on the e-mail.)

The second Harvard plagiarism story was broken in September 2003 and involves Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz. It concerns his 2003 book, "A Case For Israel" in which, according to one reviewer, Professor Dershowitz engages in an "orgy of plagiarism," committing "wholesale, unacknowledged looting" of research from an earlier book addressing the same subject.

(<http://www.counterpunch.org/cockburn09262003.html>)

Specifically, it has been reported that 22 of the 52 endnotes to the first two chapters of Professor Dershowitz's book were lifted straight from a 1984 book by Joan Peters, "From Time Immemorial," without attribution. These 22 endnotes contain not just the citations from Peters' footnotes, but also extensive quotations from the cited sources set forth in Peters' footnotes.

Professor Dershowitz's response to these reports was, at least initially, to say he had done nothing even remotely questionable. Among other things, he represented that while writing the book he had independent knowledge of the underlying sources based on his earlier research, and he stated it was hardly surprising he and Peters would cite some commonly consulted sources. In the radio interview in which he first confronted the charges, Professor Dershowitz stated that while he of course had read Peters' book, which "anybody writing a book on the Middle East would" do, he had also read "independently probably 30 or 40 other books which use the same quotes, they're very extensively used"

(<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article4825.htm>). Professor Dershowitz also accused his critics of being ideologically opposed to him and made various ad hominem attacks on them.

These ad hominem attacks apparently backfired, energizing Professor Dershowitz's critics and leading them to investigate further. Ultimately Professor Dershowitz's claim that he'd done nothing wrong, but had merely cited some commonly consulted sources which he'd found in 30 or 40 other books, sources which Peters had happened

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also to cite, was challenged with what his critics characterized as "smoking gun" evidence obtained from a reviewer of Professor Dershowitz's book. This reviewer kept the advance uncorrected proofs he'd been sent by the publisher, and the review forwarded them to the scholar who had first noticed Professor Dershowitz's plagiarism, Norman Finkelstein.

These advance uncorrected proofs contained Professor Dershowitz's own handwritten note to a research assistant directing her to copy Peters' footnotes into the manuscript of his own book. The note read: "Holly Beth: cite sources of pp. 160, 485, 486 [of Peters' book], fns 141-45." Only after these advance uncorrected proofs were discovered to be in the hands of his critics did Professor Dershowitz then assert that the advance uncorrected proofs actually supported his claim of innocence, which raises the question why he did not produce them earlier. (See <http://www.normanfinkelstein.com/article.php?pg=11&ar=5> (Dershowitz letter and Cockburn reply)) It would seem plausible to assume Professor Dershowitz would not have initially denied lifting Peters' footnotes, and would not have stated he just happened to find the same commonly cited sources in 30 or 40 other books he'd read if he had realized his publisher had sent to book reviewers advance uncorrected proofs containing what his critics characterize as "smoking gun" evidence in his own handwriting proving Dershowitz's initial statements false.

Further evidence that Professor Dershowitz lied in an effort to cover up his plagiarism, his critics argue, can be found in the fact that the footnotes in Peters' book contain some mistakes in the quotations and citations, and use ellipses in the quotations, and the very same mistakes and ellipses appear in the endnotes of Professor Dershowitz's book – proving, his critics argue, that they were simply copied verbatim from Peters' book, and Professor Dershowitz didn't even check the original sources to see whether the quotations and citations to them in Peters' book were accurate. (See <http://www.thecrimson.com/today/article349123.html>)

For background concerning the Dershowitz plagiarism story, see:

<http://www.normanfinkelstein.com/article.php?pg=11&ar=1>

<http://www.normanfinkelstein.com/article.php?pg=4&ar=1>

<http://www.normanfinkelstein.com/article.php?pg=11&ar=4>

<http://www.normanfinkelstein.com/article.php?pg=11&ar=5>

<http://hnn.us/articles/1735.html>

<http://www.democracynow.org/static/dershowitzFin.shtml>

<http://www.counterpunch.org/cockburn09262003.html>

http://www.fpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/Finkelstein/HarvardCrimson_0.html

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=349044>

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=349031>

<http://www.thecrimson.com/today/article349123.html>

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=349122>

<http://usa.mediamonitors.net/content/view/full/1162>

http://www.pressaction.com/news/weblog/full_article/spinoza10022003

<http://buffaloreport.com/articles/031012cockburn.dershowitz.html>

<http://hnn.us/readcomment.php?id=20220>

<http://www.hlrecord.org/news/2003/10/16/Opinion/Letters.To.The.Editor-530895.s>

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