"I Think I Know You from Somewhere?" Putting a Face to the Name (or Citation)

Benjamin S. Lowenthal
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It happened to me the other day. I had a moment in my life where a nominal, everyday task came alive, literally. I finally put a face to a law review citation. It happened Wednesday, February 15, 2012. I was tediously bluebooking a new article with my articles group when two familiar authors, who’s names I recognized popped up; Rock and Kitty Pring.

Rock, Kitty, and I go way back. Last semester their publications were heavily cited in an article assigned to my articles group, titled Institutional Innovation for Environmental Justice by Hon. Lord Justice Carnwath. The article covered international environmental law and the judicial protection of environmental rights. Although the article is extremely interesting and insightful (and will be available to read in the Winter 2012, Environmental Courts Edition of the Pace Environmental Law Review), for me it was not the article that stood out, it was Rock and Kitty Pring. My articles group, articles editor, and I had a long debate of whether a correct bluebook citation should include the names “Rock” and “Kitty” (who’s real names are George and Catherine). After much debate, and after much bluebooking, we concluded, that yes, the names “Rock” and “Kitty” should be included in the final citation. However, I had not yet put a face to the citation.

It finally happened when my articles group ran into Rock and Kitty again, this time in a new article and for a different type of citation. It was a citation for a speech Rock and Kitty made during the International Symposium on Environmental Courts & Tribunals at Pace Law School in April 2011! A symposium, which I attended! Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the afternoon panel since I had class, but to think, I was in the same room as Rock and Kitty. To think, we might have crossed paths without ever knowing it.

After my extreme bluebook and environmental law “nerdiness” died down, the whole event made me realize that the authors whom I tediously cite everyday are not just the first part of a bluebook citation. They are, in fact, the people at the top of their respected fields. These are the people who speak on panels at environmental law symposiums around the world. It is not just Rock and Kitty from some citation in an article I was editing for articles group. It is Rock and Kitty, a Colorado Law Professor and a conflict resolution specialist who have traveled around the world studying international environmental law. It makes me think, hopefully one day, some future law student will debate with their articles group about whether a correct bluebook citation should include “Ben” or “Benjamin” as the author’s name.

Looking ahead, the Pace Environmental Law Review is hosting another symposium this spring, the Symposium on Legal Challenges and Opportunities for Offshore Wind and Hydrokinetic Energy Development in the Northeast. And believe it or not, I recognize some of the panelists’ names from past citations.

As for my inadvertent and unbeknownst walk-in with a real life citation, a full video recording of the International Symposium on Environmental Courts & Tribunals is available online.³ I was able to watch Rock and Kitty’s presentation after all. So, in the end, I was able to put a couple of faces to a familiar citation.

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