COPYRIGHT CLAIMS BOARD

Docket number: 24-CCB-0263
May 27, 2026

Cade J. Campbell	*v.*	Dallas County Historical Foundation d/b/a The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
CLAIMANT		**RESPONDENT**

FINAL DETERMINATION

This matter has been fully submitted by the parties. For the reasons that follow, the Copyright Claims Board ("Board") finds in favor of Respondent Dallas County Historical Foundation d/b/a The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza (the "Museum" or "Respondent") and dismisses the claim against the Museum with prejudice.

I. Procedural History

Cade J. Campbell ("Campbell" or "Claimant") filed this copyright infringement claim (Dkt. 1) on September 6, 2024, and filed an amended claim ("Claim") (Dkt. 3) on September 17, 2024. The Museum filed its response (Dkt. 20) on March 17, 2025. On May 15, 2025, the Board ordered discovery to close on June 7, 2025, and set the schedule for the filing of written testimony. (Dkt. 30).

For his written testimony, Campbell filed 1,121 pages of evidence on May 13, 2025 (Dkt. 28; *see also* Dkt. 25) and 157 pages of evidence on July 23, 2025 (Dkt. 32), as well as a Statement of Richard Gomez amounting to character testimony (Dkt. 26), an additional piece of evidence consisting of an email from Darren Sutherland of Bonhams Auction House (Dkt. 27), a Party Statement ("Campbell Party Statement") (Dkt. 29), and a second Party Statement ("Campbell Second Party Statement") (Dkt. 31).[1] The Museum filed certain documents on September 4, 2025, which were amended and supplemented on September 11, 2025. The Museum filed 170 pages of documentary evidence (Dkt. 45), including witness statements by Scuddy Waggoner, Respondent's Digital Preservation Archivist (Museum Ex. 20 (Dkt. 45, at 69-73) "Waggoner Statement") and Stephen Fagin,

[1] Campbell's party statements do not follow the proper formatting under the Board's rules and between his two initial party statements, they go well beyond the Board's page limitations. *See* 37 C.F.R. §§ 220.5(b), 222.15(b)(3). However, as they are mostly repetitive of each other, Campbell is appearing *pro se*, and the Board is finding for Respondent, there is no need to make Campbell submit a new, properly formatted initial party statement.

Respondent's Head of Curatorial ("Fagin Decl.") (Dkt. 45), along with various oral histories related to the work in question (Dkt. 37-42, 44, 46-47, 49-53), and an amended party statement ("Museum Party Statement") (Dkt. 43). Campbell filed a 24-page Reply Party Statement (Dkt. 50), an amount of pages *well beyond* that allowed by Board rules, 37 C.F.R. § 222.15(c)(3), in which he attempted to pick apart the Museum's evidence and oral histories, and 66 pages of additional evidence (Dkt. 56). This case is now ready for final determination.

II. Factual History

The facts relevant to this Final Determination are highly contested. In fact, the result in this case hinges entirely on whether Campbell can satisfy his burden to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that he owns the copyright in the photograph in question. To meet that burden, his story of the origin and history of the photograph must be more credible than the Museum's.

The work at issue is a photograph of John F. Kennedy's motorcade on the day of his assassination in Dallas on November 22, 1963 (the "Work"). Claimant Ex. 2 (Dkt. 28, at 17). The Work depicts the open-air car containing Kennedy and the other passengers driving down a road with various onlookers.

According to Campbell's papers and evidence:

- The Work was photographed at Dallas Love Field Airport by a man named Jack Jordan. Campbell Second Party Statement, at 1.
- Jack Jordan died and his son, Ron Jordan, obtained ownership of the copyright. *Id.*
- In 2013, Campbell acted as an agent for Ron Jordan attempting to sell the copyright in the Work to others. Specifically, Campbell was trying to sell the Work to a man named Keya Morgan ("Morgan") for $750. Morgan's assistant was skeptical about the Work, saying it was a "low quality copy and cropped." Morgan's assistant also said that there was a much better quality "original" available for $300. Campbell responded that he had explained to Ron Jordan "that last night you [Morgan] sent me an attachment of the original photo made in 1963, and that his [the Work] was a reproduction made in

April of 1964. He is staying true to his story that his father is the photographer of this photo of JFK." Claimant Ex. 6 (Dkt. 28, at 31-35).

- In his communications with Ron Jordan, Campbell noted that the International Center for Photography had been using copies of the Work after what Campbell termed "a museum purchase in 2005." *Id.*, at 52.
- However, Morgan still offered to buy the Work and its alleged copyright as, according to Campbell, he was attempting to buy all of the copies of the image and then register the copyright as his own. Campbell recommended to Jordan that he reject Morgan's offer and sell the Work to Campbell instead, so that Campbell could "see what I can personally do with it." *Id.*
- On December 13, 2013, Ron Jordan purported to sell the copyright in the Work to Campbell for $650. Claimant Ex. 5 (Dkt. 28, at 26-30). In the bill of sale, Ron Jordan represented and warranted that his father took the photograph. *Id.*[2]
- Ron Jordan, who is now deceased, signed an affidavit that same day, December 13, 2013, affirming that on November 22, 1963, his father Jack Jordan worked near Love Field airport, walked over to where the motorcade was starting, touched the president's hand, and then stood on a boarding ramp and photographed the Work. Claimant Ex. 4 (Dkt. 28, at 22-24).[3]
- Campbell registered the Work with the Copyright Office as an unpublished work, Registration No. VAu 1-163-383, with an effective date of registration of January 17, 2014. Claimant Ex. 1 (Dkt. 28, at 1-15). The Copyright Office had extensive communications with Campbell about his application, including asking for confirmation that the Work had never been published. *Id.*

[2] The Board notes that the assignment does not purport to give Campbell the right to sue on prior infringements. That is not an issue, however, that the Board needs to address given the analysis in this Final Determination.

[3] It is unclear from where Ron Jordan learned this information or why the statements of the now-deceased Ron Jordan about what his deceased father told him should be deemed credible, especially given the other evidence, and the fact that Ron Jordan was selling Campbell a work that others had already viewed as not an original photograph of the Kennedy motorcade.

- Morgan is not the only one who has been skeptical that the Work is an original photograph. In the years since Campbell purchased the Work, he has contacted third parties and requested that they cease use of the Work. He has typically been met with skepticism as to his ownership of the Work and has been told that the Work is not an original photograph, but rather a later copy. *See, e.g.*, Respondent Ex. 12 (Dkt. 45, at 42-48).
- Campbell insists that the Work must have been taken at Love Field because, among other things: a 1966 photograph of Love Field (Claimant Ex. 21A (Dkt. 28, at 264-275)) shows a similar (supposedly yellow) truck as the one in the Work; the 1966 photograph also includes elements like a boarding ramp that are consistent with Ron Jordan's description of Jack Jordan's description of Love Field; and, the motorcade did start at Love Field. Campbell Second Party Statement, at 2. Campbell also submits what he calls the "expert analysis" of Mack White. *Id.* *See also* Claimant Ex. 27 (Dkt. 32, at 55). However, Campbell did not request or get approval to file any expert testimony, 37 C.F.R. § 225.4(b), and there is no reason to credit the assertions of Mr. White, who claims general expertise of the Kennedy assassination, regarding the Work itself.
- Campbell also states that the pavement and cables seen in the Work are consistent with those at Love Field, and he suggests that there are onlookers in the Work who are "airport personnel," although it is unclear why he comes to such a conclusion. Campbell Second Party Statement, at 2.

Particularly damning for Campbell is the fact that he does not appear to have the original negative of the Work. In fact, the back of Campbell's copy is date-stamped **April 1964**, Claimant Ex. 28 (Dkt. 32, at 87). That date strongly suggests that the Work is not the original photograph, but is a copy made five months after the assassination—and after Jack Titus, who the Museum claims is the Work's actual photographer, had disseminated his photographs of the Kennedy motorcade, as described below.

According to the Museum's papers and evidence:

- The Work *is* a photograph of the Kennedy presidential motorcade, but it was taken by Jack Titus, and not at Love Field, but from the roof of his insurance practice. Museum Party Statement, at 1.

- The Work is actually the fourth image in a series of five ("Titus Series"), one taken after each other, showing the motorcade as it moved along the street. *Id.*
- After Titus's death in 2011, his widow donated the five images to the Museum; and, at the time of the donation, his daughter also provided an oral history to the Museum. *Id.*
- Titus became part of a group of photographers who shared their photographs of the Kennedy assassination with each other soon after the assassination. That is why the Museum believes the Titus Series had somewhat widespread distribution. In fact, on October 7, 2013, Reverend Richard Tullius, who was seventeen at the time of the assassination, provided an oral history to the Museum confirming that he obtained copies of the Work from being in that same group of photographers. *Id.*, at 2.
- Reverend Tullus donated two sets of his own slides to the Museum in the late 1980s and then, in 2013, he donated 51 slides of photographs, including copies of all of the Titus Series. *Id.* Tullus stated that he received the Titus Series a few weeks after the assassination (that is, late 1963 or early 1964). *Id.*
- Tullus also, at the time he donated the Titus Series, confirmed that the Titus Series photographs were taken on the same road on which Titus worked—Cedar Springs Road—and not at Love Field. *Id.*, at 3; *see also* Museum Ex. 9 (Dkt. 45, at 27-32).
- As part of this case, the Museum hired a professional conservator to remove the Titus Series from their backings. When removed from its backing, the Titus slide corresponding to the Work shows **more** of the photograph than Campbell's copy, which definitively demonstrates that the Work was copied from the photograph in the Museum's collection, not the reverse as Campbell claims. Museum Party Statement, at 4; Waggoner Statement ¶ 9; Museum Ex. 16 (Dkt. 45, at 58-59); Claimant Ex. 28 (Dkt. 32, at 87).
- Third parties, such as the International Center for Photography, also possess prints of the Work that pre-date Campbell's copy. Museum Party Statement, at 4; Museum Ex. 12 (Dkt. 45, at 43).
- Despite Campbell's claims, the Work appears to be the fourth image in the Titus Series because: (1) the cars are lined up similarly in all of the Titus Series slides; (2) contemporaneous photographs provide

evidence that all five of the photographs in the Titus Series, including the Work, were captured on Cedar Springs Road with similar vehicles, and they have similar head and body positions of President Kennedy; and, (3) no image of Love Field matches up to any of the Titus Series, and this is corroborated by video evidence showing the motorcade at Love Field, where one can see the entirety of the area with no area matching any of the Titus Series. Museum Party Statement, at 5-8; Museum Ex. 9, 16, 18, 25-26 (Dkt. 45, at 27-32, 58-59, 61-66, 82-85).

- While Campbell points out that the Work has more pavement showing on the other side of the motorcade than the other photographs in the Titus Series, which he says is evidence that the Work does not fit in the sequence of the Titus Series, the Museum has given clear evidence as to why that extra pavement exists. A map of Cedar Springs Road from the time of the assassination shows that when the Work was photographed, within the sequence of the Titus Series, the president's car was in front of Hine Pontiac, and a corresponding picture shows a large parking lot extending from the street in front of Hine Pontiac with the same pavement. Museum Ex. 22-23 (Dkt. 25, at 78-81).

III. Defenses

To succeed on a claim for copyright infringement, a claimant must establish "(1) ownership of a valid copyright, and (2) copying of constituent elements of the work that are original." *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Serv. Co., Inc.*, 499 U.S. 340, 361 (1991). Here, Campbell cannot win this case because he cannot establish ownership of a valid copyright.

When a Certificate of Registration is effective before or within five years of the first authorized publication of the work, it is prima facie evidence of the validity of the copyright and of the facts stated in the certificate, including the claimant's ownership. 17 U.S.C. §§ 410(c), 1505(c). "However, certificates create only a rebuttable presumption that the copyrights are valid." *Norma Ribbon & Trimming, Inc. v. Little*, 51 F.3d 45, 47 (5th Cir. 1995).

Campbell registered the Work as unpublished in 2014, but it is, frankly, very unlikely that the Work could be considered "unpublished" at that time. It had been widely distributed and subject to multiple sales and offers for sale, including by Ron Jordan and Campbell. It is also unclear when the first publication occurred and whether that was

more than five years before registration. If, however, the Work was owned by Jack Jordan and then Ron Jordan, there is no evidence of an "authorized publication" more than five years before registration.

That being said, even if the Board uses the registration and applies a prima facie presumption of Campbell's ownership, the Museum ***easily*** overcomes any presumption. Campbell's claim is that the now-deceased son of a now deceased man who worked near Love Field sold Campbell the copyright to the Work, after his father took the photograph of JFK at Love Field, just as the fatal motorcade was starting. Campbell submits many photographs of Love Field and other evidence in an attempt to establish that the Work *could* have been taken there, but none of the arguments surrounding those photographs hold water. They simply do not look like the street where the Titus Series, including the Work, were taken. Campbell's arguments mostly consist of vague and generic statements that there was a similar, yellow-colored vehicle at Love Field on the day of the assassination as in the Work,[4] that the Work contains someone in a mechanic's uniform, and that the color and condition of the asphalt in the Work is similar to the asphalt at Love Field. Meanwhile, the Museum's detailed history of the Work's origin, which it has had in its collection since at least as early as 2013 (before Ron Jordan sold the (supposedly unpublished) Work to Campbell), including oral histories from the time of two separate donations of the Titus Series, makes perfect sense. Campbell contends that the Work, which is Slide 4 of 5 in the Titus Series, does not match up with Slides 1-3 and 5, and therefore it is unlikely that Slide 4 was taken by the same photographer. However, the slight differences in the shape of the street between the Work and the other slides in the Museum's collection are easily explained by the map evidence showing the indented parking lot at exactly that juncture. Moreover, the street itself looks almost exactly the same and the angles seem appropriate based on the movement of the motorcade. Despite Campbell wanting to believe that Ron Jordan legitimately sold him the copyright in the Work, the evidence says that is not accurate and, at the very least, Campbell cannot prove his ownership by a preponderance of the evidence. Because Campbell has not shown that he can succeed on the first inquiry in any copyright infringement case, the Board stops its analysis here and must dismiss the case.

[4] The Museum notes that the truck in the Work is not even yellow, but rather orange, and that the truck in Campbell's Love Field evidence is also not yellow, but white or cream. Museum Party Statement, at 9-10.

IV. Conclusion

The Board dismisses the claim against Dallas County Historical Foundation d/b/a The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza with prejudice.

Copyright Claims Board