

Title:

The old man and the V(W)-Jonathan Munk

Word Count:

360

Summary:

An 86-year-old graphic designer recently filed a lawsuit against Volkswagon saying he is the designer of the original, nearly 60-year-old VW logo. Nikolai Borg doesn't want financial compensation. He is suing Volkswagon for not recognizing his hand in the design.

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Article Body:

An 86-year-old graphic designer recently filed a lawsuit against Volkswagon saying he is the designer of the original, nearly 60-year-old VW logo. Nikolai Borg doesn't want financial compensation. He is suing Volkswagon for not recognizing his hand in the design.

"I am not after money," Borg said in an article on FreelanceUK.com. "I just want to live to see my work acknowledged. I will not settle for anything less than historical acceptance."

Borg claims a senior Nazi commissioned him to design the now world famous logo just before WW II. After being told the project was "on hold," he was surprised to see his very own design appear on military vehicles a few years later. He has been trying to get recognition ever since.

Credit-taking in the graphic design world is full of grey territory. A company might hire a designer to come up with a logo, and then hire a different company to update their logo a few years later. The changes in design might be small, and may even go unnoticed by most people. But who has the credit for coming up with the design?

Which designers have the right to list them as the originator of a particular look? Certainly the original designer deserves credit for coming up with a solid design, but doesn't a subsequent designer deserve credit for improving a design, especially if the logo the company uses is a result of the work of a second or even third designer?

For all we know, Mr. Borg submitted a great design, which was then tweaked, perhaps even several times, and then brought into use.

And what about companies that hire a designer to come up with logo concepts, then take those concepts and have an in-house designer work with them until they have the logo they were looking for all along? This is not illegal, since the company in essence buys the ideas from the designer. The company can do whatever they want with them once that transaction is complete.

But getting credit where it is deserved can be a tricky, sometimes frustrating game, as I'm sure Nikolai Borg can attest.