

Killer or Artist? Why Rap is on Trial (12.4)

For Discussion

1. **Define/Vocabulary:** persona, grand jury, indict, aspiring, phenomenon, mindset, socioeconomic, prejudicial, caveat
2. Besides using rap lyrics, what are some other ways prosecutors can make defendants seem like the sort of person who would commit the crime? What are some ways defense lawyers can make defendants seem like the sort of person who would not commit the crime?
3. Can we draw conclusions about how likely a person is to commit a crime? If so, how do these views influence the conclusions we draw from the evidence about the crime itself?
4. What are some cases where something you do or say that is legal by itself can be used as evidence of a crime?
5. "It's supposed to be freedom of speech." What is freedom of speech? Does it violate freedom of speech when a suspect's words are used against him at a trial? Why or why not?
6. How does the argument about the meaning of rap lyrics differ from the free speech argument? Under the free speech argument, does the meaning of the lyrics matter? Explain.
7. What does the author and people he quotes think some fail to understand about rap lyrics? Do they fail to understand this? Explain.
8. What, if anything, is the difference between "the real you" and a persona or image that you create? What would Deandre Mitchell say?
9. What do you think the appeal is of violent rap lyrics? Do they tell us anything about the artist's or listener's mindset? Why or why not?
10. "Jallepalli did not provide context for the lyrics as artistic convention." What is an artistic convention? If a description of murder follows artistic conventions, does that make it less revealing about the mindset of someone using it? Why or why not?
11. What do you think Mitchell means when he says his music is "a way for me to express myself"?