

CONTROL, CRIME AND CULTURE: RAP LYRICS AND VIDEOS AS CRIMINAL EVIDENCE

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This article addresses the use of rap lyrics and videos as evidence in criminal trials. Prosecutors may present the lyrics and videos as the defendant's autobiography, confessions, and to authenticate lifestyles. Defense attorneys maintain that the lyrics and videos are artistic expressions and fictional accounts, which fall under free speech and should be protected under the First Amendment. Several questions have been addressed in this Article. Are courts criminalizing rap music and rappers? Should rap lyrics and videos continue to be admitted as evidence of a defendant's involvement in a crime? This Article advances two arguments. The main argument is that the admission of rap lyrics and videos as criminal evidence is a way of social control. This Article also argues that it is a good idea for rappers to include disclaimers at the end of their lyrics and videos.