

26 June 2003

From:
Eric J. Lakits
Sterling Heights, MI

To:
Bill O'Reilly
Fox News

Dear Mr. O'Reilly,

On last night's show, you and your guest discussed the link between rap music and harm against black women. Your guest cited evidence comparing the circumstances of black women who listened to rap music and those who did not, and then drew a conclusion based on a correlation.

This is the same mistake that is so often made in studies by self-proclaimed experts with political agendas: the existence of a correlation does not indicate cause-and-effect. When comparing the two groups--those who listen to rap music and those who do not--the most obvious thing that stands out to me is the fact that there is indeed a group who does not listen to rap music. The question should be asked, "why is that?" And then, is it true that listening to a type of music affects your environment, or is it more likely that your environment will affect your choice in music?

This is exactly the type of issue that gives both liberals and conservatives a chance to unite and show their darker sides. Liberals will use this as a chance to relieve people of any personal responsibility for the actions--i.e., "the music made me do it"--while the conservatives will use it to encroach on our freedom of speech--as you seemed to imply by attacking the industry as you did last night. Both are equally disastrous.

I am not speaking out in defense of rap music because I like--the fact is that I despise it--rather I am speaking out in its defense because it is not the primary target being attacked. What is being attacked are issues much bigger than any particular concretes they may subsume: these are personal responsibility and freedom of speech.

Eric J. Lakits
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