

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

O.J., a minor, by and through his father,
M.J.,

Plaintiff,

v.

CHAPPAQUA CENTRAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT, CHAPPAQUA CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF
EDUCATION, DR. CHRISTINE
ACKERMAN, Superintendent of
Chappaqua Central School District, in her
individual capacity, and DR. SANDRA
SEPE, Principal of Horace Greeley High
School, in her individual capacity,

Defendants.

No. 24 Civ. 2830

Hon. Nelson S. Roman

**EXPERT REPORT OF
JUSTIN D BURTON, PhD**

Introduction

1. I am Dr Justin D Burton, Professor of Music at Rider University. I received a PhD in Musicology from Rutgers University in May 2009 and have worked at Rider University since 2012, serving in the Music Production degree as well as in the Gender & Sexuality Studies program.

2. I am the author of *Posthuman Rap* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Hip Hop Music* (2018). My scholarship revolves around the intersection of race, gender, and sex in hip hop and pop music, as evidenced in my C.V., which is included as **Attachment 1**.

3. In my scholarly work, I analyze hip hop as an expressive genre primarily by and for marginalized populations. I situate the genre in its social and political context in order to best understand how it functions beyond surface-level meanings.

4. I also work as a consultant for ISO Arts, an organization that provides equity training to arts organizations.

5. I have not previously served as an expert witness.

6. I disclose that the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) is paying me \$100/hour for preparing this report and \$150/hour if I am called for deposition.

Assignment

7. I have been engaged by FIRE to analyze the song “I’m Jeffrey Dahmer,” recorded in part by O.J., and to contextualize it within the norms of hip hop, broadly, and Meme Rap, specifically. I have been asked to consider the lyrical content of the song and what an ordinary interpretation of those lyrics would be.

8. In addition to the song, I have also consulted the filed complaint for the case and the list of resources included in **Attachment 2**.

Summary Conclusions

9. Based on my research and my review of the materials, I have reached the following conclusions:

- a. The lyrics O.J. performs in “I’m Jeffrey Dahmer” should not be interpreted literally. The expressive nature of hip hop, broadly, and Meme Rap, specifically, means that artists express ideas through metaphor, exaggeration, and parody, among other literary devices.

b. An ordinary listener would therefore not interpret O.J.'s lyrics in "I'm Jeffrey Dahmer" as threatening language or hate speech. Rather, O.J., who identifies as queer and is called "faggot" in the hallways of the same school that suspended him for recording this word off campus, is engaged in linguistic reclamation when he raps these words. This is a process whereby members of marginalized groups take the derogatory words used against them and redeploy them in positive or familiar ways in order to regain some measure of control over the language.

LYRICS AREN'T LITERAL: THE EXPRESSIVE NATURE OF HIP HOP AND MEME RAP

10. To understand O.J.'s utterances in the song "I'm Jeffrey Dahmer," it's necessary to understand how expression works in hip hop, writ large, as well as within the confines of the subgenre of Meme Rap.

11. Hip hop is a cultural practice with roots in the South Bronx, New York, in the 1970s. The original practitioners were primarily Black and Caribbean youth who used DJing, rap, dance, and graffiti as a means of expression in a context of economic distress and racial inequity. As rapper KRS-One puts it, "rap was the final conclusion of a generation of creative people oppressed with the reality of lack" (*Ruminations* 217). In Tricia Rose's germinal study of hip hop, *Black Noise*, she notes that "life on the margins of postindustrial urban America is inscribed in hip hop style, sound, lyrics, and thematics" (21). This sociopolitical context proved fundamental to the genre's expressive content, which has long revolved around

1) partying—a way to cut loose and seek relief from an unfair world, 2) protest—social commentary that speaks out against and strives to be heard in a world that would withhold resources from communities of color, and 3) rhetorical play—imaginatively and spectacularly wielded words that help artists navigate a hostile world. Hip hop formed out of its originators’ needs for navigating lack, providing its practitioners with an outlet (partying), a means of being heard (protest), and a method for processing and understanding their place in that world (rhetorical play).

12. By the end of the 1970s, hip hop music—commonly referred to as rap—had traveled outside of the Bronx and begun circulating on record, rapidly expanding its reach so that over the ensuing decades it would inspire fans and artists from all corners of the United States and from across the globe to consume and produce their own versions of the art form. In *How Hip Hop Became Hit Pop*, Amy Coddington notes that from 1984-87, rapped vocals accounted for no more than 4% of *Billboard’s* Hot 100 chart, and by 1991-93, rapped vocals would comprise 25% of the same chart (79-80). Countless subgenres of hip hop now reverberate in mainstream and niche cultures alike, and as those subgenres have proliferated, the original core expressive elements wax and wane, appearing in various measures. Reality and Conscious Rap, for instance, prioritize protest-like lyrical content that calls attention to the harsh realities of the world and imparts knowledge to its listeners. Subgenres like Crunk and Trap, meanwhile, emphasize partying and feature a good deal of call-and-response lyrics that make for easy crowd participation in a club setting. And a subgenre like Gangsta Rap notoriously employs rhetorical play through the

dramatization of the gangsta, a persona who navigates an unjust world by any means necessary.

13. Gangsta Rap, in fact, starred in hip hop's first big turn in the national spotlight, as late 1980s and early 1990s debates raged about whether the genre was art or obscenity. Eric Harvey, in his 2021 *Who Got the Camera?*, positions the violent lyrics of Gangsta Rap in the context of this debate and argues that it's best understood not as a literal depiction of what rappers were doing outside the studio but rather as a response to the characterization of Black people on the national news and in early "reality" television shows like *Cops* and *America's Most Wanted*. Those television shows aired only the most sensationalist content (as opposed to, as Harvey puts it, "officers negotiating mounds of paperwork or sitting around offices and squad cars," 3) and overrepresented Black men and People of Color as violent criminals. Gangsta Rappers responded by embodying those stereotypes and aiming their violent lyrics at the police and government who they believed had abandoned and terrorized them. Gangsta Rap—and violence in hip hop more broadly—is not a literal account of rappers' actions; rather, it is best understood as a counterweight to the propaganda found on a show like *Cops*, part of a sensationalized exchange within the context of "reality" media. Harvey keenly observes that *Cops* and Gangsta rap understood the same fundamental truth: "the more salacious the content, the more profitable the content" (4).

14. Being in the mainstream also means that there's a great deal of music influenced by hip hop that is untethered from the genre's expressive roots. Pop, for

instance, often appropriates the sounds and gestures of hip hop without any real investment in the genre's original purposes. Coddington traces the way hip hop's rising prominence on mainstream radio in the 1980s and 90s "forc[ed] listeners interested in hearing hit music to confront the genre. But this confrontation was hardly difficult, as hearing rap in this context required little knowledge of hip hop's culture, politics, and history" (81). Meme Rap, at first blush, seems to be an unserious appropriation of hip hop aesthetics that is also divorced from the genre's roots. As a subgenre built entirely around the idea of "going viral," Meme Rap downplays technical skill or ability, engages in sophomoric humor, and prioritizes lyrics that are intended to shock or offend, all for the purpose of gaining as much attention as possible. In many cases, it is unserious, but there's sometimes more to it than just that. To be sure, Meme Rap features a great deal of rhetorical play and also incorporates partying and, depending on the artist, social commentary, just like hip hop long has. The difference is that Meme Rap tends to incorporate that expressive content in an entirely parodic way.

15. Parody is a form of critique that comedically exaggerates elements of a style or genre in order to call attention to those elements' weaknesses. And though parody is a critical practice, it necessitates a familiarity with—and often appreciation of—that which it parodies. Like other forms of parody, Meme Rap can both lovingly and bitingly critique its object, and Meme Rap's main critique seems to revolve around the commercialization of hip hop. If pop music separates stylistic elements of hip hop from the genre's culture, history, and politics, Meme Rap

supercharges that separation and produces often nonsensical and purposefully cringey songs made up of some of rap's least endearing traits.

16. For instance, many Meme Rappers are exaggeratedly “bad” at rapping, using obvious rhymes, moving arrhythmically through a verse, or leaving empty space where words should go. While most subgenres of hip hop prize “flow”—the ability to rap seamlessly over a beat while serving up smart rhymes with excellent breath control—Meme Rap often purposefully disrupts flow. To do so may be a form of “trolling,” where a person pointedly annoys an audience by refusing to perform according to social or, in this case, musical norms, but it may also be understood as commentary on the way the commercialization of hip hop has resulted in “naïve attempts to dabble in youth culture or, worse, cynical efforts to scavenge in rap’s ‘cool’” (Bradley *Book of Rhymes* 23). Adam Bradley rather succinctly appraises that “a wack flow is death to rap” (23), and Meme Rap often parodically prioritizes that wackness.

17. Second, Meme Rap’s sophomoric humor, similarly, may be a form of trolling, but it can also be understood as commentary on common hip hop tropes. A consistent theme in Meme Rap involves having sex with someone’s mother (or other relative) or girlfriend. Ray William Johnson, an internet comedian and writer, [claims to have written](#) one of the first Meme Rap songs, “[Doin Your Mom](#)” (2009). The title sums the song up quite accurately. The chorus features six repetitions of “doin your mom” punctuated by “You know we’re straight doin your mom.” The verses, meanwhile, mostly set up middle school punchlines:

I approached her in the checkout line and said “Yo, baby, wassup?”

She had two gallons of milk, and I was starin at her jugs

Yeah, she called me Pledge cause I knocked the dust off it

Later made me a sandwich and she cut the crust off it

She’s so therapeutic when I need to cure my restlessness

I say br-br-br-br-br-br, motorboat your mom’s breasteses

The bridge near the end of the song sums up the point of the proceedings thusly: “I’m having sex with your mother, and that makes me better than you.”

18. The goal of these sorts of lyrics is to troll and humiliate the imagined addressee of the song, but it also represents the hyper-commodified distillation of a Black cultural practice that influences hip hop: playing the dozens, a form of verbal combat where participants insult one another, often and most notoriously through the use of “yo mama” jokes that target an opponent’s mother. In his foreword to *The Anthology of Rap*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr describes the practice of signifying—which includes the dozens—as “a linguistic boxing match,” says “the Dozens and the Toasts [another form of Black signifying] were, first and foremost, forms of art, and everyone on the street or sitting around the barbershop knew this,” and concludes that everyone who he saw engaged in this form of verbal exchange “was literate in the fine art of signification” (xxiii). This high art form that Gates has dedicated a

portion of his career to carefully cataloging and preserving is a common element in hip hop practices. Meme Rap exaggeratedly performs what happens once that practice is cycled through the commercial engine of the music industry and pulled further and further from its roots. In an extreme case like “Doin Your Mom,” that separation leaves a song that is purposefully, as Adam Bradley might put it, wack.

19. Wackness—a general lack of cool—it should be noted, is a key element of Meme Rap and stands in stark contrast to the general coolness that is a common part of most hip hop performances. Regina Bradley, in a ranging exploration of Black coolness in the commodified context of contemporary hip hop, notes that “cool pose” is arguably the “most visible script of popular black masculine performance,” defining cool pose as “the performance and positioning of the black male body as a symbol of coolness” (55). Bradley’s analysis of cool pose in commercialized rap music teases out the complexity that many Black male rappers navigate as they wrestle with stereotypes about Black masculinity and their own efforts to define what is cool for themselves in a genre that is consumed by so many white people. Meme Rappers largely duck that complexity altogether and, instead of negotiating cool, just perform personas that are corny. For Black Meme Rappers, this would involve the subversion of expectations, as they sidestep the audience’s desire for their coolness, and for white Meme Rappers, this involves an exaggerated performance of expectations, as they amplify the audience’s assumption that white rappers can’t be cool. Either way, Meme Rap doesn’t participate in the negotiation of cool the same way a good deal of hip hop does, which is part of what marks it as parodic.

20. Finally, Meme Rap’s proclivity for shocking and offensive lyrical content is, once again, both a form of internet trolling and an exaggerated engagement with hip hop content. The Meme Rapper known as Ugly God features this hook in the song “Water”:

I drip on your bitch like water

I splash on your bitch with the water

I feel like I’m 21 Savage [a well-known Southern rapper]

I pull up and fuck on your daughter

“My music is trash...I’m off topic. I say random shit, and it’s just vulgar trash,” is the way Ugly God described himself in [an interview with *Complex* magazine](#) when he was first gaining attention in 2017. Ugly God’s first taste of internet fame came off the virality of his 2017 song “I Beat My Meat,” an ode to the many different ways the artist enjoys masturbating. But Ugly God and Meme Rappers aren’t breaking new ground with vulgar lyrics. In the late 1980s, artists like 2 Live Crew were charged and tried in court on grounds of obscenity because of how explicitly sexual their music was (this was the other front of the “art v obscenity” debate mentioned in regards to Gangsta Rap in paragraph 13). Henry Louis Gates, Jr, who testified on the group’s behalf, described the group as being “engaged in heavy-handed parody, turning black and white American culture on their heads” (Gates, “2 Live Crew, Decoded”). In this case, Meme Rap becomes a parody of a parody, performing

something of a doomsday scenario for what happens to Black cultural practices in a hypercommodified space.

21. Meme Rap's goal is to go viral, and it consistently seeks to achieve this by featuring lackluster technique, childish humor, and shockingly offensive lyrical content. The subgenre exists as a parody, purposefully and exaggeratedly deploying the most controversial aspects of hip hop in an effort to gain as much attention as possible. As with most parody, it is neither simply an instance of the thing it parodies (hip hop), nor clearly separate from the thing it parodies. It also isn't always good or successful at what it's doing. Parody is a dicey technique that, if not crafted well, can clumsily do the thing it's trying to critique. A good deal of Meme Rap ends up being a parade of hip hop tropes separated from the genre's culture, politics, and history as opposed to a critique of how the commercialization of hip hop can produce such separation. Even where art fails, it's still art.

22. O.J.'s participation on "I'm Jeffrey Dahmer" has all the markings of Meme Rap, calling for attention through the use of offensive lyrical content and trolling its listeners with shocking material. O.J.'s performance isn't practiced in the art of flow, and there's little evidence of an attempt to be cool. In recording the song, O.J. and his friends were engaged in a popular subcultural practice of music-making that, in its most successful form, deploys a complex parodic critique of mainstream culture.

O.J.'s EXPRESSION IS LINGUISTIC RECLAMATION

23. In order to properly understand O.J.'s use of "faggot," we can zoom out from Meme Rap without losing sight of it. That is, the following argument applies to Meme Rap, but it also more broadly applies to hip hop and popular music more generally. As a queer-identifying person, O.J.'s use of derogatory language is best understood as linguistic reclamation, a process by which an oppressed or marginalized group adopts slurs used against them and uses them to describe themselves or each other.

24. "Faggot" emerged as a derogatory word in the early 20th century and has become increasingly offensive over time. It's a word used to shame, marginalize, and terrorize specifically effeminate gay men (Zwicky, 84). "Faggot" is often reported to be heard at sites of violence against queer people and signals a range of negative outcomes for queer people targeted by it, from disdain to physical danger (Weeks 2011). The use of the word "faggot" by queer people is a way of reappropriating a word that was invented to inflict psychological harm and to signal physical harm, transforming it into a term of endearment or affinity within the group.

25. Many different marginalized groups reclaim derogatory words, and some terms that are benign today once had derogatory connotations ("Protestant," "Black," "queer"). However, not all linguistic reclamation works the same way. As Gregory Coles spells out, the process "is multidimensional, at once linguistic and performative, having the capacity both to redeem words for extensive use and to restrict them as a way of reinforcing solidarity among rhetorically disadvantaged groups" (426). That is, while some words, like "Black" and "queer," are reclaimed and

become part of everyday parlance for most people, others, like “faggot,” are reclaimed in what Coles calls a more narrow sense, where people within a marginalized group use the term, but it is still considered offensive when people from outside that group utter it.

26. To understand O.J.’s use of “faggot,” we can consider another term that is narrowly reclaimed in queer contexts. James McNally, in his analysis of queer artist Azealia Banks’s hit “212,” argues that her use of the word “cunt” is a way to “reassert her sexuality on her own terms.” McNally’s description of what Banks does with the word directly parallels how narrowly reclaimed linguistic reclamation works: “In addition to allowing her to appropriate a sexual gesture that rappers often use to express power over a romantic interest, Banks’s prominent and provocative use of the word ‘cunt’ reclaims a term men commonly use to disparage women and rearticulates it as a figure of strength and control.” In her study of queer hip hop, Lauron J. Kehrer expands on McNally’s analysis to note that what Banks is doing is common in the queer Ballroom communities that inform her music: “‘cunt’ or ‘cunty’ has evolved in Ballroom parlance to mean exactly what Banks defines it as: strong and feminine” (59). Just as Banks—and the Ballroom culture she draws on—takes a word used derogatorily against women by men and crafts it into a source of strength, O.J. takes a word he is derogatorily called in the hallways of his school and redeploys it on his own terms, under his control.

27. Linguistic reclamation is a critical tool available to oppressed groups that allows them to take control of words intended to derogate and mold them into

something else. To punish O.J. for saying a word that others say to him in negative contexts is to deprive him of a crucial technique he can use to make sense of the world around him and to find his place in it. And to punish O.J. for use of the word in a musical context is to misunderstand how musical expression works in hip hop and Meme Rap and to deprive him of an artistic expressive outlet, as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin D Burton", written over a horizontal line.

2 December, 2024

JUSTIN D BURTON

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

- PhD in musicology, Rutgers University, May 2009
Dissertation: “iPod People: Experiencing Music with New Technology”
- M.A. in musicology, Rutgers University, January 2006

EMPLOYMENT

- Rider University, Professor of Music, Fall 2024-Present
- Rider University, Associate Professor of Music, Fall 2018-Summer 2024
- Rider University, Assistant Professor of Music, Fall 2012-Summer 2018
- Rider University, Adjunct Music History Faculty, Fall 2008-Summer 2012
- Rutgers University, Part-Time Lecturer, Summer 2009-Spring 2012
- Montclair State University, Adjunct Music History Faculty, Fall 2011
- Drew University, Adjunct Music History Faculty, Spring 2011

AREAS OF INTEREST/PROFICIENCY

Popular Music Studies, Sound Studies, Posthumanism, Hip Hop, Critical Race Theory, Southernness (Global and US), Music and Technology, Gender and Queer Theory, Ableton Live (proficiency), Traktor Pro (proficiency), Serato (proficiency)

PUBLICATIONS—BOOKS, BOOK CHAPTERS, JOURNAL ARTICLES

- “Make Him Give Me Einstein: Pop Trap and Black Women’s Pleasure,” *Cambridge Themes in American Literature and Culture: Hip Hop*. Ed. Rob Turner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, *forthcoming 2024*. Co-authored with Brea M Heidelberg.
- “They Can Hear Us: Surveillance and Race in *A Quiet Place*,” *Sounding Out!* Ed. Jennifer Stoeber, Liana Silva, and Aaron Trammel. New York: New York University Press, *forthcoming 2024*.
- “‘Now She Wanna Lick My Plum’: Azealia Banks and the Undoing of AntiBlackness,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies* 3:2 (2018): 133-42.
- *Posthuman Rap*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
 - Reviewed by Steven Gamble in *Popular Music* 38:1 (2019): 142-44.
- “Welcome to the Dirty South: Listening to the Politics of Southern Hip Hop in an Ecomusicological Framework,” *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 8:1 (2017): 28-44.
- “Azealia Banks, Seapunk, and Atlantis: An Embattled Humanist Mixtape,” *Shima* 10:2 (2016): 81-93.
- “Sounding Global Southernness,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 27:4 (2015): 381-86. Co-authored with Ali Colleen Neff.

- “Topologies: The Popular Music Survey and the Posthumanities,” *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 5:1 (2014): 125-32.
- “Dancing Silhouettes: The Mobile Freedom of iPod Commercials,” *Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies, Vol 2*. Ed. Sumanth Gopinath and Jason Stanyek. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014: 311-36.
- “From Barthes to Bart: *The Simpsons* v *Amadeus*,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 46:2 (2013): 481-500.

EDITOR—JOURNALS AND BOOKS

- Media Reviews section of *Global Hip Hop Studies* journal, 2020-present. Co-editor with Monique Charles. <https://www.intellectbooks.com/global-hip-hop-studies>
- *Oxford Handbook of Hip Hop Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Co-editor with Jason Lee Oakes. Available at <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190281090.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190281090>
- Special Issue of *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 27:4, “Sounding Global Southernness” (2015). Co-editor with Ali Colleen Neff.
- *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 24:3 (2012). Co-editor with Karen Tongson and Gustavus Stadler (editors-in-chief), Anthony Kwame Harrison (editorial collective), and Eric Weisbard (editorial board).

PUBLICATIONS—ACADEMIC

- “Review: *Hush: Media and Sonic Self-Control* by Mack Hagood,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 32:1 (2020): 133-36.
- “Trap Music,” *St James Encyclopedia of Hip Hop Culture*. Ed. Thomas Riggs. Farmington, MI: Gale Cengage, (2018).
- Co-Author, “From Anarchy to Institution: An IASPM-US History Roundtable,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 26:4 (2014): 521-33. With Steve Waksman.
- “Music Review: The Roots, *Undun*, Def Jam 001628202. Kanye West and Jay-Z, *Watch the Throne*, Roc-A-Fella/Roc Nation/Def Jam 001542602,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 7:3 (2013): 343-47.
- “Book Review: *Let the World Listen Right: The Mississippi Delta Hip-Hop Story*. Ali Colleen Neff,” *Journal of American Culture* 34:3 (2011).
- “Book Review: *Music and Urban Geography*. Adam Krims,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 20:2 (2008), 201-05.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

- “The Queerness of Wham’s ‘Last Christmas,’” *Sounding Out!* (6 January 2020). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2020/01/06/the-queerness-of-whams-last-christmas/>
- “‘Can’t Nobody Tell Me Nothin’: Respectability and the Produced Voice in Lil Nas X’s ‘Old Town Road,’” *Sounding Out!* (17 June 2019). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2019/06/17/cant-nobody-tell-me-nothin-respectability-produced-voice-lil-nas-x-old-town-road/>
- “Won’t Back Down: Tom Petty, Jason Aldean, and Masculine Vulnerability,” *Sounding Out!* (8 April 2019). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2019/04/08/wont-back-down/>
- “They Can Hear Us: Surveillance and Race in *A Quiet Place*,” *Sounding Out!* (18 June 2018). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2018/06/18/they-can-hear-us-surveillance-and-race-in-a-quiet-place/>
- “Teach Me How to Dougie Like a Mediocre White Man,” *Sounding Out!* (19 February 2018). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2018/02/19/teach-me-how-to-dougie-like-a-mediocre-white-man/>
- “This Land is Drone Land,” *In Media Res* (31 January 2018). Available at <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2018/01/28/land-drone-land>
- “‘Tis the Season to be Melancholy: Sia’s Everyday Christmas,” *Musicology Now* (25 December 2017). Available at <http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2017/12/tis-season-to-be-melancholy-sias.html>
- “Benefit Concerts and the Sound of Self-Care in Pop Music,” *Sounding Out!* (26 June 2017). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2017/06/26/benefit-concerts-and-the-sound-of-self-care-in-pop-music/>
- “You Got Me Feelin’ Emotions: Singing Like Mariah,” *Sounding Out!* (17 April 2017). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2017/04/17/you-got-me-feelin-emotions-singing-like-mariah/>
- “Malcolm Gladwell’s Bad Aesthetics,” *Sounding Out!* (10 October 2016). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2016/10/10/malcolm-gladwells-bad-aesthetics/>
- “Trap Irony: Where Aesthetics Become Politics,” *Sounding Out!* (27 June 2016). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2016/06/27/trap-irony-where-aesthetics-become-politics/>
- “Of Resilience and Men: How Bieber, Skrillex, and Diplo Play with Gender in ‘Where are Ü Now,’” *Sounding Out!* (25 January 2016). Available at <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2016/01/25/of-resilience-and-men-how-bieber-skrillex-and-diplo-play-with-gender-in-where-are-u-now/>
- IASPM-US Interview Series: Justin Williams, *Rhyming and Stealin* (21 April 2014). Available at <http://iaspm-us.net/?p=5287>

- “Tomahawk Chopped and Screwed: The Indeterminacy of Listening,” *Sounding Out!* (20 February 2014). Available at <http://soundstudiesblog.com/2014/02/20/tomahawk-chopped-and-screwed-the-indeterminacy-of-listening/>
- Guest Editor, “The Wobble Continuum,” *Sounding Out!* 23 January-20 February 2014. Available at <http://soundstudiesblog.com/category/the-wobble-continuum/>
- “Are You Bold Enough to Reach for Love? Janelle Monáe and the Gaps of Nah Nah Nah,” *LASPM-US* (15 May 2013). Available at <http://iaspm-us.net/?p=4158>
- IASPM-US Interview Series: Mark Katz, *Groove Music* (30 April 2013). Available at <http://iaspm-us.net/?p=4057>
- “The First Time I Ever Heard: A Love Supreme,” *LASPM-US* (6 September 2012). Available at <http://iaspm-us.net/?p=2726>
- “As One with the Masses: Childish Gambino at Prospect Park,” *LASPM-US* (9 July 2012). Available at <http://iaspm-us.net/?p=2485>
- Editor, *LASPM-US* (June 2011-May 2013). Available at iaspm-us.net. Selected series below:
 - “IASPM-US Interview Series,” *LASPM-US* (October 2011-May 2013). Available at iaspm-us.net/iaspm-us-interview-series/
 - Co-Editor, “Stop Making Sense: The Unintelligible in Popular Song,” *LASPM-US* (May 2013). With Elizabeth Lindau. Available at iaspm-us.net/submissions/stop-making-sense-2/
 - Co-Editor, “Sonic Borders Virtual Panel,” *LASPM-US* (January-February 2013). With Liana Silva (Managing Editor, *Sounding Out!*). Available at iaspm-us.net/sonic-borders/
 - “The (Sometimes) Political Machinations of Popular Music,” *LASPM-US* (October-November 2012). Available at iaspm-us.net/political-machinations/
 - “The First Time I Ever Heard,” *LASPM-US* (September 2012). Available at iaspm-us.net/first-time-i-ever-heard/
- “Erykah Badu,” *Musicians and Composers of the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Chris Moose. Pasadena: Salem Press, 2009.
- “Chuck D,” *Musicians and Composers of the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Chris Moose. Pasadena: Salem Press, 2009.

INVITED LECTURES/APPEARANCES

- “Facilitating Difficult—But Necessary—Conversations in the Classroom,” Rider University Faculty Development Day.
 - 10 January 2017. With Dr Brea Heidelberg.
 - 12 January 2022.
- “Responding to Dr Schreiner’s ‘Faculty Attitudes and Behaviors that Contribute to Thriving,’” Rider University TLC Forum, 31 August 2021. With Dr Aubrey Daniels and Dr Evelyn McDowell.

- “White Professors, Students of Color: Tracking Power and Privilege in the Classroom,” 2019 Rider Teaching Institute, 23 May 2019.
- Guest Speaker, “Race, Gender, and Sexuality in American Popular Music,” Amherst University seminar, 12 November 2018.
- “Publishing while Parenting,” Rider University Annual Writing Retreat, 6 June 2018.
- “Creating Safe and Supportive Classrooms for LGBTQ+ Students,” Rider University Teaching Talk, 13 April 2018. With Melissa Hoffman and Dr Erica Ryan.
- Guest Speaker, “After Humanisms,” University of Pittsburgh graduate musicology seminar, 17 February 2015.
- “[insert title here],” Rider University Faculty Development Day, 21 January 2015.
- “Swang and Swerve: Hydroplaning across Big K.R.I.T.’s Posthuman Flow,” Fluidity in Black Popular Music panel at Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA, 3-4 October 2014.
- Guest, “OutKasted Conversations,” youtube series hosted by Regina N. Bradley (29 June 2014). Available at [youtube.com/watch?v=hGikNRCuIAg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGikNRCuIAg)
- “Cadillactica, by Way of the Underground: Big K.R.I.T.’s Posthuman Liquidity,” Faculty Lecture Series at Rider University, Lawrenceville, NJ, 25 March 2014.
- “Sounding Global Southernness,” University of William and Mary graduate seminar, Williamsburg, VA, 12 March 2014.
- “Wobbling the Speakerspace (music mix),” *Sounding Out! Podcast 26* (27 February 2014). Available at <http://soundstudiesblog.com/2014/02/27/sounding-out-podcast-26-tktktk/>
- Guest, “Can Music Change the World?” *Strange Fruit* (15 June 2013). WFPL (Louisville, KY). Available at <http://wfpl.org/post/strange-fruit-can-music-change-world>
- “Making it Pop: Thick Description and the Thrill of Popular Music Writing,” Institute of Popular Music at the University of Rochester Music Educator’s Workshop, Rochester, NY, 29 June 2013.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “CV and CV Cover Letter Workshop for Graduate Students and Recent Graduates,” International Association for the Study of Popular Music Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN, 26-30 June 2023. With Norma Coates, Rebekah Farrugia, Anthony Kwame Harrison, Ryan McCormack, Justin Patch.
- “Make Him Give Me Einstein: Over-Writing Gendered Logics in Late 2010s Trap Music,” International Association for the Study of Popular Music-US Branch Annual Conference, Ann Arbor, MI, 26-28 May 2022. With Brea Heidelberg.

- “A Materialist Critique of Cultural Equity Work in the United States,” Social Theory, Politics, and the Arts, New Orleans, LA, 10-13 October 2019. With Brea Heidelberg.
- “The Produced Voice: Collaboration, Technology, and Contemporary Vocal Production in Pop Music,” Popular Culture/American Culture Association, Washington, DC, 17-20 April 2019.
- “‘Now She Wanna Lick My Plum’: Producing Voices and Desire in Azealia Banks’s ‘212,’” MOPOP, Seattle, WA, 26-29 April 2018.
- “Producing Southernness, Producing Blackness: The Sound of Contemporary Southern Hip Hop,” International Association for the Study of Popular Music-US Branch Annual Conference, Nashville, TN, 8-11 March 2018.
- “‘I Don’t Rock Wit You, Homie’: Sonic Precarity in the Posthuman Vestibule of Leikeli47,” Precarious Sounds//Sounding Sanctuary, New York, NY, 16-17 February 2018.
- “‘Now She Wants to Lick My Plum’: The Produced Voice in Azealia Banks’s ‘212,’” Voice and Identity: Touches, Textures, Timbres, Winchester, UK, 28 January 2017.
- “Safe Sex, Pay Checks, and Cracked Voices: Rae Sremmurd’s Disappearing Club,” Experience Music Project POP Conference, Seattle, WA, 14-17 April 2016.
- “Becoming-Earth, Oil Sands, and Sound: A Response to Kate Galloway,” American Musicological Society Annual Conference, Louisville, KY, 12-15 November 2015.
- ELR3 (Ecomusicology Listening Room): Chair, American Musicological Society Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI, 6-9 November 2014.
- “Cadillactica, by Way of the Underground: Big K.R.I.T.’s Liquid Transformations,” International Association for the Study of Popular Music-US Branch Annual Conference, Chapel Hill, NC, March 2014.
- Plenary Session: IASPM-US History Roundtable, with Steve Waksman, Kevin Dettmar, Paul Fischer, Reebee Garofalo, Anahid Kassabian, Beverly Keel. International Association for the Study of Popular Music-US Branch Annual Conference, Chapel Hill, NC, March 2014.
- ELR2 (Ecomusicology Listening Room; ecosong.org): Selection Committee and Discussant -American Musicological Society Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, 7-10 November 2013 -58th Annual Conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Indianapolis, IN, 14-17 November 2013 (sponsored by Popular Music Section).
- “Big Southern Rap Impresarios: ‘Big Pimpin’ and the Rise of the Dirty South,” International Association for the Study of Popular Music-US Branch Annual Conference, Austin, TX, March 2013.
- Ecomusicology Listening Room (ecosong.org): Committee Member (representing AMS Popular Music Special Interest Group), Opening Remarks, and Room 4 Discussion (ecosong.org/room-3-2.html), American Musicological Society/Society for Ethnomusicology/Society for Music Theory Joint National Conference, New Orleans, November 2012.

- “Trillin in Harlem: The Unmistakable Crunkness of A\$AP Rocky”
-POP/IASPM-US Joint Conference, New York, March 2012.
-Popular/American Culture Association National Conference, Boston, April 2012.
- “Big Apple, Little Apple: The iPod and Contested Identity in New York City”
-54th Annual Conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Mexico City, November 2009.
-Popular/American Culture Association National Conference, San Antonio, April 2011.
- “So Cyborgs Think They Can Dance: Academic Theory Meets Mass Media,” Society for American Music/IASPM-US Joint Conference, Cincinnati, OH, March 2011.
- “Women and Wax: The Misogyny of Collecting in Nick Hornby’s *High Fidelity*,” Sports Literature Association Annual Conference, Williamsport, PA, June 2010.
- “Plains, Strains, and Automobiles: Music and Narrative Desire in *No Country for Old Men*,” Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Annual Conferences, Cincinnati, October 2008.
- “Posthuman Hybridity in *So You Think You Can Dance*,” Sports Literature Association Annual Conference, Johnson City, Tennessee, June 2008.
- “Space is Place: The iPod’s Urban Ethos”
-University of Rhode Island Graduate Student Conference, March 2008.
-IASPM-US Annual Conference, Iowa City, April 2008.
- “Transforming the Ideal: Faust Heroes in Goethe, Berlioz, Gounod, and Boito,” German Studies Association Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, September 2006.
- “Rationalization, Technology, Genre, and Identity: An iPod Paper, Shuffled,” IASPM-US Annual Conference, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, February 2006.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Program Committee, International Association for the Study of Popular Music—US Branch annual conference, Philadelphia, PA, 18-21 April 2024
- Expert Witness, Rap on Trial, 2023-present
Rap on Trial provides expert testimony in the interest of protecting defendants whose music lyrics are being used as evidence against them in the legal system
- Advising Task Force, Rider University, 2023-present
- Program Committee, Society for American Music annual conference, online, 9-12 June 2021
- Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Rider University, 2021-23
- Co-Chair, AAUP Committee to Study Discrimination and Harassment Policies at Rider, and Increasing Diversity in Rider’s Faculty, 2021
- Co-Editor, Media Reviews, *Global Hip Hop Studies*, 2020-present

- Editorial Board, *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 2020-23
- Equity Consultant, ISO Arts, 2020-present
Work with arts organizations in the US with a specific focus on helping them improve racial equity among the workforce and with the communities they serve
- Chair, Popular Music Studies Search Committee, Rider University, 2019-20
- Chair, Curriculum Design, Game and Interactive Media Design, Rider University, 2018-19
Research and design interdisciplinary curriculum for new degree offering; coordinate standards and learning outcomes across Colleges/Schools; consult with industry professionals; collaborate on budget and administrative structure for the major; chair hiring committee for first TT faculty in the major
- Popular Music Studies Search Committee, Rider University, 2018-19
- President's Council on Inclusion, Rider University, 2018-23
- LGBTQ Advisory Committee, Rider University, 2018-20
- Chair, Game and Interactive Media Design Search Committee, Rider University, 2018-19
- Promotion and Tenure Committee, 2018-22
- Arts & Entertainment Industries Management Search Committee, Rider University, 2018-19
- Regular Contributor, *Sounding Out!*, 2016-20
Sounding Out! (soundstudiesblog.com) is a publication that engages scholars alongside a broader readership and approaches sound studies as it relates to gender, race, class, and ability; as a regular contributor, I submitted three essays (roughly 2,000 words apiece) each year
- Standard V Working Group, Rider University, January 2016-17
Review university assessment protocol against Middle States accrediting policies on assessment, specifically Standard V; advise departments campus-wide on designing and performing assessments
- Program Committee, *Locations and Dislocations: An Ecomusicological Conversation*, Westminster Choir College, Princeton, NJ 8-10 April 2016
- School of Fine and Performing Arts Academic Policy Committee, Rider University, 2015-21;
Chair, September 2016-21
Vet academic policies, including course and curriculum revisions, new course and curriculum proposals, and administrative policies (academic standing guidelines, grading policies, interdisciplinary curriculum endorsements); Chair duties include setting agenda, distributing materials for review, running meetings, representing the committee's questions/opinions to upper administration, submitting approved policies to academic coordinator, registrar, and other academic policy committees
- Co-Chair of Program Committee, 2015 Annual Conference for International Association for the Study of Popular Music, US Branch, Louisville, KY, 19-22 February 2015
- Co-Chair, Rider University Hip Hop Conference, Lawrenceville, NJ, 20 November 2014

- Affirmative Action Committee, Rider University, September 2014-19
- IASPM-US Organization History, with Barry Shank, Steve Waksman, Reebee Garofalo, Jason Hanley, Lauren Onkey, March 2013-June 2015
Coordinate and edit interviews with past presidents and *JPMS* editors. Organize physical records from past presidents and *JPMS* editors. Prepare materials for housing at Rock N Roll Hall of Fame.
- Executive Board (At-Large Seat), International Association for the Study of Popular Music, United States Branch, March 2013-February 2015
- Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Award Committee, Rider University, September 2012-Present
- Sound Design Consultant, *Metamorphoses*, Rider University, October-November 2013
- Web Editor, International Association for the Study of Popular Music, United States Branch, June 2011-May 2013
Solicit and curate content on the organization's website (iaspm-us.net), including designing CFPs, creating regularly updated publication series, and editing and posting content. Function as primary mouthpiece of organization. Redesign the site's interface. Migrate and maintain listserv.
- Program Committee, 2013 Annual Conference for International Association for the Study of Popular Music, US Branch, Austin, TX, 28 February – 3 March
- David Sanjek Memorial Graduate Student Paper Prize Committee, IASPM-US, 2013 (Chair) and 2012
- Sound Design, *The Crucible*, Rider University, October-November 2012
- Committee for formation of new degree at Rider University, BA in Popular Music, 2010-11
Worked alongside faculty, chair, and deans in the large-scale plan for the degree's course requirements. Wrote course descriptions for new course offerings. Maintained documents pertaining to the new degree that were submitted to the curriculum board. Taught "teaser" course in Spring 2012 as part of recruitment of new students.
- Peer Review Reports: *American Music*, *Celebrity Studies*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *Global Hip Hop Studies*, *Humanities*, *LASPM Journal*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Musicology*, *MELUS*, *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *Journal of the Society for American Music*, *Mediascapes*, *Southern Cultures*, *Temenos*, Austrian Science Fund, Bloomsbury Academic Press, Columbia University Press, Oxford University Press, Palgrave Press, Routledge Press, University of California Press, University of Michigan Press, University of North Carolina Press, University of Mississippi Press, University of Texas Press, Utah State University Press
- Founder/President, Rutgers University Musicological Society, 2005-2007
Initiated and presided over a forum for graduate musicology students, faculty, and guest lecturers to present their work. Administration and budget management. Streamlined communication between students and administrators, including a collaborative re-tooling of graduate comprehensive exams.
- Program Notes, Rutgers Symphony Orchestra, 2004-06

COURSES TAUGHT

Music Production, Rider University—Required Courses

- MUS 213: Digital Composition of Popular Music, Fall 2023 (2), 2022 (2), 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, Summer 2018 (Directed Study), 2017 (2), 2016, 2015 (2), 2014, 2013 (2), 2012 (2)
Software-based composition primarily using Ableton Live.
- MUS 313 (MUS 216 through 2022): Digital Synthesis, Spring 2024 (2), 2023 (2), 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018 (2), 2017, 2016 (2), 2015, 2014 (2), 2013 (2)
Software-based synthesis primarily using Ableton Live.
- MUS 316: Digital Mixing and Mastering, Fall 2023, 2022, 2020, 2018
- MUS 116: Digital DJing, Spring 2024, 2023, January Term 2020, 2018
- MUS 491: Popular Music Internship, 2016-Present
Serve as advisor for Music Production students who complete professional internships. Coordinate pre-agreement terms, communicate with site supervisor during internship period, collect evaluations and reflections from students and supervisors.
- MUS 498: Popular Music Capstone, 2013-Present
Serve as advisor for Music Production majors who complete a student-led project in their senior year. Hone proposals, facilitate resources, provide feedback as projects develop.
- MUS 205: Pop & Rock History I, January Term 2024, Fall 2020
- MUS 206: Pop & Rock History II, January Term 2023, 2020
- MUS 308: Global Music, Summer 2018 (Directed Study)
- MUS 319: Arranging II, Fall 2023 (Directed Study)

Music Production, Rider University—Electives

- MUS 495: Special Topics, Welcome to the Dirty South, Spring 2016
- MUS 490: Independent Study, Spring 2014 (Jalyssa James, Tiffany Morales, Toni Walker-Stanley), Summer 2013 (Marissa DiPilla), Fall 2010 (John Gratton)
- MUS 315: Black Music in America, Spring 2020, 2018, 2015, Summer 2013
- MUS 218: Postmodernism and Popular Culture, Fall 2017, Fall 2014
- MUS 215: Music and Technology in a Mobile Society, Fall 2019, 2015, Spring 2013, Summer 2012, Spring 2012
- MUS 214: Writing about Music, Spring 2021, 2019, Fall 2016, Spring 2015; Directed Studies in Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Summer 2022, 2019, 2018, Fall 2013, Fall 2012
- MUS 210: Music Theory III, Spring 2014, Spring 2010
- MUS 106: Survey of Music History II, Spring 2014
- MUS 105: Survey of Music History I, Fall 2013, 2012
- MUS 204: Jazz History, Summer 2019 (Directed Study)

General Education and Minor Offerings, Rider University

- MUS 120: Music and Society, Fall 2023, Summer 2023, Spring 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Spring 2017, Fall 2016, Fall 2014, Spring 2014, Fall 2013 (2), Summer 2013, Fall 2012
A general education course that emphasizes the relationship between musical styles and the cultures that produce them.
- GSS 310: Special Topics: Say My Name: Sex and Gender in Pop Music, Spring 2019
- GSS 245: Popular Constructions of Gender, Fall 2014
- GSS 200: Introduction to Women's Studies, Spring 2024, Fall 2022
- GSS 100: Introduction to Gender and Sexuality, Summer 2022, 2021, Spring 2021, Summer 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014
- BHP 490: Baccalaureate Honors Program Capstone, Spring 2022
- BHP 321: Gender and Sexuality in Hip Hop and R&B, Spring 2017, Fall 2014, 2013
Co-taught with Brea Heidelberg.
- BHP 270: Music and Literature, Fall 2022
Co-taught with Kelly Ross.
- MCS 110: Race, Class, and Gender in America, Fall 2019, Summer 2019, Fall 2018, Summer 2018, Spring 2018, Fall 2017, Summer 2017, Spring 2015
- AMS 227: Martin Luther King's America, Spring 2022

Adjunct Work

- MUS 301: World Music (for music majors), Rutgers University, Spring 2012
- MUS 420: Special Topics course on the Symphony, Rutgers University, Spring 2012
Repertory course for music majors that covers the symphony from the operatic sinfonia to its late Romantic form.
- MUS 120: Music and Society, Rider University, Spring 2012, Fall 2011 (2), 2010, Winter 2010, Fall 2009, Spring 2009
A general education course that emphasizes the relationship between musical styles and the cultures that produce them.
- MUS 501: Introduction to Research, Rutgers University, Fall 2011, Spring 2011, Fall 2010, Spring 2010
Graduate course that immerses new MA/PhD and MM/DMA students in research methods, introduces them to databases and the library, and cultivates independence in budding scholars and musicians.
- MUHS 307: Music History I, Montclair State University, Fall 2011 (2)
First semester of the Music History sequence for majors, covering ancient music through Classical.
- MUS 3: Introduction to Western Art Music, Drew University, Spring 2011
Course for non-majors that spans ancient through modern art music.

- MUS 300: Beethoven and the Romantic Age, Rider University, Spring 2011, Fall 2008
- MUS 550: Music and Technology, Rutgers University, Summer 2010
Graduate seminar that tracks the use of technology throughout music history, incorporating theories of identity formation alongside the examination of technological sounds in music.
- MUS 306: Contemporary Music Experience, Rider University, Fall 2010, 2009
Focus on 20th century music, incorporating both the classical and popular traditions, as well as music's relationship to technology throughout the century
- MUS 101: Introduction to Music, Online Course, Rutgers University, Fall 2010 (2), Spring 2010 (2), Fall 2009 (2)
- MUS 210: Music Theory III, Rider University, Spring 2010
- MUS 211: Music of the Renaissance, Online Course, Rutgers University, Fall 2009
- MUS 101: Introduction to Music, Rutgers University, Summer 2009, Winter 2009, Fall 2008, Summer 2008, Winter 2007, Spring 2005
- MUS 151: American Popular Music in the 20th Century, Rutgers University, Summer 2007
- MUS 102: Introduction to Music History, Rutgers University, Spring 2006, Fall 2005
- MUS 100: Rudiments of Music Theory, Rutgers University, Fall 2004
An ad hoc class designed to lead freshman music majors to a passing grade on their theory diagnostic exams.
- MUS 103: Introduction to Music Theory, Rutgers University, Fall 2003 (Graduate Assistant)

ATTACHMENT 2—List of Resources

BRADLEY ADAM. *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Civitas, 2009.

CODDINGTON AMY. *How Hip Hop Became Hit Pop: Radio, Rap, and Race*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023.

COLES GREGORY. "The Exorcism of Language: Reclaimed Derogatory Terms and Their Limits," *College English*. 2016;78(5): 424-46. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44075135>

GATES, JR HENRY LOUIS. "2 Live Crew, Decoded," *New York Times* 19 June 1990. <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/06/19/opinion/2-live-crew-decoded.html>

GATES, JR HENRY LOUIS. "Foreword." *The Anthology of Rap*. Edited by Adam Bradley and Andrew DuBois. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

HARVEY ERIC. *Who Got the Camera? A History of Rap and Reality*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2021.

KEHRER LAURON J. *Queer Voices in Hip Hop: Cultures, Communities, and Contemporary Performance*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2022.

KRS-ONE. *Ruminations*. New York: Welcome Rain Publishers, 2003.

MCNALLY JAMES. Azealia Banks's "212": Black Female Identity and the White Gaze in Contemporary Hip-Hop. *Journal of the Society for American Music*. 2016;10(1):54-81. doi:10.1017/S1752196315000541

ROSE TRICIA. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994.

WEEKS LINTON. "The Fa-Word: An Insulting Word in the Spotlight," *NPR* 28 May 2011. <https://www.npr.org/2011/05/28/136722113/the-fa-word-an-insulting-slur-in-the-spotlight>

WRIGHT LES. *The Bear Book II: Further Readings in the History and Evolution of a Gay Male Subculture*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

ZWICKY ARNOLD. "The Other F Word," *Out* June 2003, 82-84, 140.