

GRILLZ: The Interesting and Complex Life of a Commodity

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Production

Custom Made Grills

•The first form of mouth grills; a mold of the customers mouth is taken and a custom made grill is constructed.

- The grill is either permanently placed inside the mouth and adhered with dental cement or
- The grill is a "pull out" and snaps into place over the teeth
- Oral adhesive is used to attach semi-precious stones to the grill or
- If the customer chooses, notches can be made into the grill so that the stones are permanently set into the grill.

At Home Grill Kits

- Popular among youth who cannot afford to have custom fit grill made.
- Sold on the internet, these grill kits boast a "perfect fit" with "no fail" directions on how to use the silicone casting bar.
- Usually made of a cheaper material.
- Since there are air pockets around the casting bar, the customer is more susceptible to oral infections and bacterial buildup.

Marketing

- Aimed at the urban community.
- Grills are a major fashion trend that appeals to status and wealth.
- Most advertising of grills is in through the Internet.
- The rapper Paul Wall is the largest manufacturer of high quality grills.
- Johnny Dang is the leading manufacturer of the more pricier grills.



Johnny Dang, Paul Wall, and Nelly

- Self advertisements
- Ads in the back of Hip-Hop magazines
- Urban clothing stores
- Local businesses

- Grills appear the most in rap videos.
- Rappers love to flaunt their affluence by purchasing expensive jewelry and flashy cars.
- Grills symbolize a certain type of lifestyle.
- Grills project a sign of wealth, the "thug life", or black culture.



XXL Magazine

Consumption

- Men aren't the only ones who wear grills
i.e. Venus and Serena Williams, Brooke Hogan, Paris Hilton, and Britney Spears all have grills.
- Before the "pullout" became popular, having a permanent grill was as common as getting a tattoo.



Brooke Hogan



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Blood Diamonds

•In 2002, the UN approved the Kimberley Process scheme aimed at preventing conflict diamonds entering the market.

Kimberly Process:

The Kimberley Process is a joint government, international diamond industry and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds - rough diamonds that are used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments. The trade in these illicit stones has contributed to devastating conflicts in countries such as Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme is an innovative, voluntary system that imposes extensive requirements on Participants to certify that shipments of rough diamonds are free from conflict diamonds. The Kimberley Process is composed of 45 Participants, including the European Community. Kimberley Process Participants account for approximately 99.8% of the global production of rough diamonds.



Victims of Blood
Diamond Violence



Contrasting who wears the diamonds
and who mines them.

De Beers

•The De Beers Group is a Johannesburg-based diamond mining and trading corporation. In the 1980s, the firm had a near de facto monopoly on the world's diamond trade (80% share). However, that share has been reduced to 60% due to discoveries outside of De Beers' control such as in Russia and Canada.

•De Beers has actively promoted diamonds as being symbolic of eternity and love, and therefore the ideal jewel for an engagement or wedding ring.

•Their famously successful advertising campaigns have included measures such as: showing diamonds as wedding gifts in popular romance films publishing stories in magazines and newspapers which would emphasize the romantic value of diamonds and associate them with celebrities employing fashion designers and other trendsetters to promote the trend on radio and, later, television enlisting the British Royal Family to directly promote diamonds sponsoring the 2007 Formula 1 car for Scuderia Ferrari Marlboro



De Beers a.k.a.
Element 6

Adhesives

- Dental Cement
 - Permanent grills are adhered to the teeth with dental cement, using the same procedure one uses when capping teeth.
- Silicone Casting Bar
 - Pull out grills are held in the mouth by a silicone casting bar, which snap into place.
 - These Casting Bars come with "one size fits all" grills.
 - The silicone casting bar, after being submerged in hot water, molds to the shape of the teeth ensuring a "perfect fit".



At home Grill kit

Where are diamonds found?



Diamonds

•About 130 million carats (26,000 kg) are mined annually, with a total value of nearly USD \$9 billion. About 100 tons are synthesized annually.

•Synthetic diamonds are produced each year at nearly four times the rate of natural diamonds, the vast majority of synthetic diamonds produced are small imperfect diamonds suitable only for industrial-grade use.



Diamond Mine



Diamonds



Effects of
Blood
Diamonds



Effects of Blood Diamonds

Blood (Conflict) Diamonds

•Diamonds mined in a war zone and sold, usually clandestinely, in order to finance an insurgent or invading army's war efforts.

•The United Nations has prohibited the export of conflict diamonds, arguing that their trade finances combatants, who may at one time or another be fighting for or against a government, but it is civilians who bear the brunt of violence and mutilations.

•Example: UNITA rebels in Angola and the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone, who states they were financed by the government of Liberia also through diamond sales.

Blood Diamonds

•The diamond industry website, www.diamondfacts.org, claims that 99% of diamonds are not conflict by the U.N. definition. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in September 2006 that conflict diamonds are still entering the United States.

•Conflict diamonds may also be becoming less traceable. A recent book, "Blood from Stones," links Al-Qaeda to diamonds. The terrorist group is likely using the diamonds in place of cash, which thanks to stronger legislation on seizing terrorist associated bank accounts are not as viable.

•The media attention on conflict diamonds, has lead to a number of attempts to promote an ethical alternative to conflict diamonds. Canada and its diamond manufacturers are promoting their domestically-produced diamonds as conflict-free, as are synthetic diamond manufacturers such as Adia Diamonds, Gemesis and Apollo Diamond.



Effects of Blood Diamonds

What is a grill?

•A grill is a decorative mouth accessory, a dental piece worn over teeth.

•Grills can be made out of gold, silver, or platinum and adorned with precious gems such as diamonds.

•Grills are custom fit by taking a mold of the teeth and then designing it to custom fit your teeth.



Dental Grillz

History

•Grills originated in the southern states of America (states such as Georgia, Alabama, Texas, and Louisiana).

•Grills are considered to be part of the southern African-American Culture.

•Before the 2005 debut of "Grillz" by artist Nelly, grills were already integrated into the urban culture.

•Originally, grills were not removable; the teeth were capped with gold. Now, grills are removable mouth pieces.



Flava Flav

Raw Materials

Grills are composed of either gold, silver, or platinum.

Gold

•Gold is the most commonly used element for grills

•Major producers of Gold are South Africa, Canada, the United States, and Australia.

•Gold is currently valued at USD \$647.00 per ounce



Gold Nuggets

Dirty Gold

•Like Blood or Conflict Diamonds, the mining and sale of gold in African countries has resulted in conflict, destruction, and abuse of human rights.

•The retailers, which are the Zale Corp., the Signet Group (Kay Jewelers), Tiffany & Co., Helzberg Diamonds, Fortunoff, Cartier, Piaget, and Van Cleef & Arpels, are being praised by the No Dirty Gold campaign.



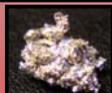
Dirty Gold Logo

Silver

•Silver is used as a cheaper alternative to a gold grill.

•Major producers of Silver are Canada, Mexico, Peru, Australia and the United States.

•Silver is currently valued at USD \$5.00 per ounce.



Silver Nugget

•Grills are adorned with various jewels, however diamonds are the most commonly used gems.

•Diamonds are the hardest known natural material and is the most expensive of the two best known forms of carbon, whose hardness and high dispersion of light make it useful for industrial applications and jewelry.



Platinum nugget

Platinum

•Platinum, a rare element, is the most expensive material used to make grills.

•Major producers of Platinum are South Africa, Colombia, certain western states of the United States, and Ontario, Canada.

•Platinum is currently valued at USD \$1154.00 per ounce.