GRILLZ: The Interesting and Complex Life of a Commodity

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At home Grill kit

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

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Blood Diamonds

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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 “Grills” by artist Nayeli, 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.

Dental piece worn over teeth.

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 (May jewelry), Tiffany & Co., Helzberg Diamonds, Freds, Cartier, Plaque, and Van Clee & Arpe, are being pressed by the No Dirty Gold campaign.

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.

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.

Platinum nugget

• Platinum, a rare element, is the most expensive material used to make grills.
• Major producers of Platinum are South Africa, Colombia, certain eastern states of the United States, and Ontario.
• Platinum is currently valued at USD $1164.00 per ounce.

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Blood Diamonds

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

• Kimberley 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 armed conflicts against legitimate governments. The trade in these illicit stones has contributed to devastating conflicts in countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone, 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 15 Participants, including the European Community. Kimberley Process Participants account for approximately 99.8% of the global production of rough diamonds.

• If the customer chooses, notches can be made into the grill so that the stones are permanently set into the grill.

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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 One for Scuderia Ferrari Marlboro.

• The rapper Paul Wall is the largest manufacturer of the more popular grill brands.

• The retailer, which are the Zale Corp., the Signet Group (May jewelry), Tiffany & Co., Helzberg Diamonds, Freds, Cartier, Plaque, and Van Clee & Arpe, are being pressed by the No Dirty Gold campaign.

• Grills appear the most in rap videos. •Rappers love to flaunt their affluence by purchasing grills.

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

• Platinum is currently valued at USD $1164.00 per ounce.

• Before the ‘pullout’ became popular, having a grill was considered a sign of a successful man.

• 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 Ada Diamonds, Gorealis and Apical Diamonds.

• 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.

• Younger generations are the largest consumers of grills, who are the main supporters of the Hip-Hop culture.

• Urban clothing stores •Local businesses

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Marketing

• 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

• of the customer chooses, notches can be made into the grill so that the stones are permanently set into the grill.

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