

Hip-hop for all; a brief conversation with white rapper Rittz

Written by Alysha "AP" Price



Has hip-hop truly diversified?

Is the culture becoming more accepting of variety within itself? In recent years there's been an emergence of rappers ranging in race and gender. Perhaps the people have spoken and the culture has now evolved beyond the artist and resembles the audience. However, as in any organization the dominating party has the most influence and there is no question that African-American men make up the majority of hip-hop artists.

I caught up with Atlanta rapper Rittz, whose appearance in no way matches the stereotypical norm as a rapper. Rittz is a Caucasian male with a look that is best described by the name of his record label – strange.

Fresh off of the release of his first album titled "The Life and Times of Jonny Valiant," Rittz shares his feelings on being a minority in hip-hop.



AP: How does it feel to be a minority in hip-hop, where the majority is made up of African-American males?

Rittz: It feels like there is more pressure to be better and do better but there isn't as much pressure as it used to be. Now days, everybody raps but in my opinion hip-hop is Black culture, it always will be and should be. But no doubt as a white rapper it's harder. I feel like if you're going to be a white rapper then you need to be *good* at it, you can't be playing around

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being average. Now there have been some white rappers getting away with being average these days but in my opinion if you're white you need to try to be better than the norm. Personally being a minority in the game puts pressure on me to not come whack because there is seriously no room for that.

AP: Speaking of minorities in hip-hop what thoughts do you have, if any, on homosexual rappers?

Rittz: My take on it is ... to each his own. Who cares. It's not my place to judge anyone who has struggled to pursue their dream or career as a rapper. Rap is a competitive sport but I'm not one to put anyone down to make myself look a certain way. As I said before I make music for people who have struggled to overcome something in their lives, all I care about is uplifting people. I'm not trying to put anybody down because I don't want that type of energy being brought to me.