

# Rappers in Disharmony on P2P

Katie Dean from *Wired* online: <http://www.wired.com/gadgets/portablemusic/news/2003/10/60650>

Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) center, talks with actor and recording artist, LL Cool J, left, and Jack Valenti, President and CEO of the Motion Picture Association, right.

Two popular rappers added their voices to the debate over file sharing in the Senate on Tuesday, a platform usually dominated by the music industry's lobbying group.

The Recording Industry Association of America keeps a united front, but LL Cool J and Chuck D candidly shared their opposing views on file sharing and its effect on the industry. The musicians were invited to testify before the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, which is investigating the effect of peer-to-peer file sharing on the entertainment industry.

Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) scheduled the hearing because he was concerned about the tactics used by the RIAA to round up suspected file swappers.

LL Cool J threw the first volley:

"My first question is this: Do people in the entertainment industry have the same rights as other Americans to fair pay for fair work? If a contractor builds a building, should people be allowed to move into it for free just because he's successful? Should they be able to live in this building for free? That's how I feel when I create an album, or if I make a film, and it's shooting around the planet for free."

LL Cool J said he has seen a gradual decline of his record sales even though he made some of the greatest hits of his career recently.

"Artists are a huge and extremely important part of American culture," LL Cool J said. "We're the dreamers."

Musicians like studio drummers, for example, are seriously affected by illegal file sharing, according to Cool J. "He's not LL, he's not getting the big check and doing the movie thing and all of the talk show stuff that I do, but he's on the drums -- he's making a living. (Because of piracy), "these people can't live."

"I'm not against technology, I'm not against the Internet, I just wish that music could be downloaded legitimately," LL Cool J said.

Chuck D, leader of Public Enemy, vehemently opposes what the industry is trying to do.

"Technology giveth and it taketh away, and the industry knows this," Chuck D said. "The horseshoe makers probably got upset at the train manufacturers because (the new industry) took away their transport dominance, just as the train manufacturers probably got mad at the airline industry."

"I think this expands artistry and it's about adjustment," he said.

"As an artist representing an 80-year period of black musicianship, I never felt that my copyrights were protected anyway," Chuck D said. "I've been spending most of my career ducking lawyers, accountants and business executives who have basically been more blasphemous than file sharers and P2P. I trust the consumer more than I trust the people who have been at the helm of these companies."

"The record industry is hypocritical and the domination has to be shared. P2P to me means 'power to the people,'" Chuck D said. "And let's get this to a balance, and that's what we're talking about."

Others who testified included Lorraine Sullivan, a college student sued by the music industry for sharing copyright music files; Mitch Bainwol, CEO of the RIAA; Jack Valenti, CEO of the Motion Picture Association; and Alan Morris, executive director of Kazaa's parent company, Sharman Networks.

Coleman said the documents provided to him by the RIAA show that the trade group was fair in targeting only those who had shared substantial (around 1,000) copyright music files.

"However, there is nothing under current law that requires the RIAA to target only 'egregious' offenders in the future," Coleman said. "There is nothing in the current law that restricts the scope of the RIAA's use of subpoenas to ferret out unlawful downloaders."

The music trade group sued 261 people earlier this month. On Monday, the RIAA announced it had settled 52 of the suits so far. Sullivan settled for \$2,500.

During his testimony, Bainwol called on peer-to-peer sites to voluntarily change the default settings for their users so people don't unknowingly share files with others, to block copyright works from being downloaded or uploaded, and to clearly disclose to users that such behavior is a violation of federal law.