

They Not Like Us: The Drake-Kendrick Beef, 2026

**24-Hour Committee
MUNE XV**



**Crisis Director: Ted Carter
Chair:**

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Letter from the Crisis Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to this year's 24-Hour Committee! My name is Ted Carter, and I am thrilled to be your crisis director this year. I'm currently a senior at Emory double majoring in political science and history. I have been involved with Model UN since my freshman year, and chaired the 24-Hour Committee during my sophomore year. This committee is really special because there is truly nothing quite like the ideas you will come up with at 3AM after what has felt like hours on end of debate. I also served as the USG of Logistics for last year's MUNE. Outside of Model UN, I am very involved in community service across Atlanta, and I enjoy listening to music and watching basketball in my free time.

This committee has been my Model UN passion project for about a year or so, and revolves around the rap feud between Drake and Kendrick Lamar. As rappers, producers, NBA players, Internet personalities, and other figures, you will be tasked with finding solutions to some of the music industry's biggest challenges in the wake of this feud. I am excited to see what creative solutions you will come up with as you navigate the complex network of alliances that has been redrawn as a result of the feud. On that note, please be as creative as you want—no revision of history is too out there, so long as you tie it back to your character and the larger questions at hand. Also, do not worry if you don't have any prior knowledge of the feud, as this background guide should explain everything you need to know.

I am beyond excited for this committee, and I hope you are too! I look forward to seeing what you come up with this weekend.

Best,
Ted Carter

Sensitivity Statement

At MUNE, we have a responsibility to ensure delegates feel safe and welcome in their committees. Therefore, we ask delegates to treat one another respectfully, and refrain from making any unwanted comments. MUNE maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind. If an issue arises, please alert your CD, ACD, or Chairs, and we will help you as quickly as possible.

These rules bear special repeating because of the contents of the songs that make up the background of this committee. Throughout the diss tracks released as part of the Drake-Kendrick beef, themes of domestic abuse, sexual assault, racial politics, misogyny, child abuse and neglect, and addiction took center stage. Delegates must not make light of these topics, and *this committee is not a place to discuss the legitimacy of any of the allegations levied by one artist toward another*. Consequently, we will not tolerate any arcs, speeches, directives, or JPDs that attempt to trivialize the themes of the feud. Quite frankly, because the committee is focused on how the music industry can move forward after the feud, we would be shocked if the specific contents of the diss tracks became a major topic of discussion in committee, but we ask delegates to be mindful of these rules anyway.

We want this weekend to be enjoyable and valuable for all delegates. We thus expect delegates to be respectful and welcoming to one another. Finally, delegates must adhere to modern moral standards, meaning any arcs, speeches, directives, or JPDs dealing with genocide, colonialism, exploitation of people, etc. will not be tolerated.

The 24-Hour Committee and Special Mechanics

This committee is special because, rather than a standard weekend schedule, it involves an all-nighter session on Thursday and will wrap up by mid-day Friday. It requires a good degree of stamina—and energy drinks if that’s your sort of thing—but it can be very rewarding. As I noted previously, there is nothing in Model UN quite like the 3AM solutions you will devise during this committee. My recommendations are to make sure you bring some snacks, energy drinks, coffee, etc.

Additionally, this committee will have a small special mechanic where the backroom may turn pro-con debates into rap battles. The backroom may use this power at its discretion, and it may be used three times throughout the night. During these segments, there will only be one for and one against speech per directive, and every directive in the respective cycle will be debated on by rapping. Should the pro delegate win the rap battle, the directive will automatically pass, and should the con delegate win, the directive will automatically fail. To decide the winner, the entirety of the room (excluding the two delegates participating but including the chairs) will vote. Delegates will be notified in advance when there will be a rap battle, and will be given some additional time to prepare their speeches in these situations.

Finally, at any point late into the night, delegates may pass a directive to have staffers deliver Waffle House to the entire committee. This directive may only be passed once, and it must be after 12AM, but beyond that delegates are free to choose their preferred time.

Timeline of Events

1

October 6, 2023

Drake and J. Cole release "First Person Shooter," igniting the feud

2

March 26, 2024

Future, Metro Boomin, and Kendrick Lamar release "Like That," responding to "First Person Shooter" and dissing Drake and J. Cole

3

April 5, 2024

J. Cole releases "7 Minute Drill," responding to and dissing Kendrick Lamar. It is deleted from streaming on April 10, marking the end of J. Cole's involvement in the feud

4

April 12, 2024

Future and Metro Boomin release *We Still Don't Trust You*, featuring disses on Drake from Future, A\$AP Rocky, and The Weeknd

5

April 13, 2024

Rick Ross releases "Champagne Moments," dissing Drake

6

April 19, 2024

Drake releases "Push Ups," responding to "Like That" and *We Still Don't Trust You*. He also releases "Taylor Made Freestyle" on social media, featuring AI-generated vocals from 2Pac and Snoop Dogg

7

April 30, 2024

Kendrick Lamar releases "euphoria," responding to "Push Ups" and "Taylor Made Freestyle"

8

May 3, 2024

Kendrick Lamar releases "6:16 in LA" on social media, warning Drake to not escalate the feud any further

9

May 3, 2024

Drake releases "Family Matters," responding to "euphoria" and "6:16 in LA" and significantly escalating the feud

10

May 3, 2024

Kendrick Lamar releases "meet the grahams" less than an hour later, with scathing disses directed at Drake and his inner circle

11

May 4, 2024

Kendrick Lamar releases "Not Like Us," once again dissing Drake. The song would go on to be the feud's defining song, and win numerous awards

Timeline of Events, Continued

12

May 5, 2024

Metro Boomin releases “BBL Drizzy,” an instrumental dissing Drake

13

May 5, 2024

Drake releases “The Heart Part 6,” responding to “meet the grahams” and “Not Like Us.” The song is critically panned and Drake later deletes it from social media, effectively bowing out of the feud

14

June 19, 2024

Kendrick Lamar performs the “Pop Out: Ken & Friends” concert, featuring numerous West Coast musicians, other artists involved in the feud (such as The Weeknd), and NBA players, among others

15

July 4, 2024

Kendrick Lamar releases the music video for “Not Like Us,” responding to several of Drake’s disses from across the feud. The video is considered by some to be Kendrick Lamar’s victory lap

16

November 22, 2024

Kendrick Lamar releases GNX, the first post-feud album from either artist. It makes references to Drake and would go on to win numerous awards

17

November 25, 2024

Drake files a petition against UMG, alleging that the label (which both he and Kendrick Lamar are signed to) used artificial streams to boost the popularity of “Not Like Us”

18

January 15, 2025

Drake sues UMG for defamation, alleging he had been physically threatened as a result of the lyrics of “Not Like Us.” He also withdrew his previously filed petition days before suing

19

February 9, 2025

Kendrick Lamar performs at the Super Bowl LIX halftime show, with disses on Drake woven into his performance

20

February 14, 2025

Drake releases *Some \$exy \$ongs 4 U*, a collaborative RnB album with PARTYNEXTDOOR. The album makes occasional references to the feud but is largely a departure from it

21

March 17, 2025

UMG files to dismiss Drake’s lawsuit. On October 9, a judge sides with UMG and dismisses the suit

22

May 15, 2026

Drake releases *Iceman*, *Habibti*, and *Maid of Honour* simultaneously, making references to the feud. Some critics allege the albums signify Drake’s inability to move on from it

The Feud in Detail

Before 2023

Early in their careers, Drake and Kendrick Lamar had a relatively friendly relationship. The two released two songs together: “Buried Alive Interlude” on Drake’s *Take Care* (2011) and “Poetic Justice” on Kendrick Lamar’s *good kid, m.A.A.d city* (2012). Kendrick Lamar also opened for one of Drake’s early tours.

However, by 2013, their relationship had shifted. On a guest verse on Big Sean’s “Control,” Kendrick Lamar named Drake—alongside numerous other artists—as an artist was “tryna murder” in terms of competition. Drake responded subtly with “The Language” from his album *Nothing Was The Same* (2013), calling Kendrick boring. The two artists would then, for the next ten years, direct occasional sneak disses—or disses that were not obviously about each other on the surface but clearly directed at each other to those more aware of their relationship—at one another. There were also a few cases of more direct disses, including when Drake called out then-President Barack Obama for saying he preferred Kendrick Lamar. In terms of content, these disses largely ended up being irrelevant for the feud once it escalated, though they did represent a growing rift between rap’s two biggest stars.

The Feud Begins

On October 6, 2023, Drake released his album *For All The Dogs*. The album’s biggest hit, “First Person Shooter,” featured a guest verse from J. Cole, where he rapped “Is it K-Dot [Kendrick]? Is it Aubrey [Drake]? Or me? / We the big three like we started a league.” A few months passed with no reply from Kendrick Lamar, until March 26, 2024, when Future and Metro Boomin released their collaborative album *We Don’t Trust You*. On “Like That,” the song that would become the album’s most popular song—largely due to his guest verse—Kendrick Lamar responded to J. Cole’s “big three” idea, rapping “It’s just big me.” His verse also included other lyrics that targeted Drake, including one that attacked Drake’s comparisons of himself to Michael Jackson by reminding that “Prince outlived Mike Jack.” With this song, the feud had officially begun.

We Don’t Trust You represented more than the beginning of the feud, however. Prior to the album’s release, Drake and Future had established themselves as one of rap’s most prominent duos. The two had released numerous songs together, including two that would go number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and the collaborative album *What a Time to Be Alive*, and had also toured together in 2016. However, on *We Don’t Trust You*, Future seemingly abandoned Drake, not only by siding with Kendrick Lamar by association through “Like That,” but also through his own sneak disses on Drake on the song “We Don’t Trust You.” Future’s reasons for siding with Kendrick Lamar were unclear—and they remain so to this day—but regardless, the rift between the

two artists proved that the feud could have the potential to shake up rap music's previously established relationships.

The immediate response to "Like That" from Drake was relatively tame. The day after the song's release, he—at the time on tour—told a crowd in Florida "I got my head up high, my back straight" and that nobody in the world could touch him. Drake's message was effectively that he did not care what Kendrick Lamar had to say and that he was too big for the feud.

J. Cole, however, took a different approach. On April 5, he released the album *Might Delete Later*, which featured the song "7 Minute Drill." On this song, J. Cole called into question Kendrick Lamar's relevance and authenticity, while also suggesting that his music had declined significantly in quality since he first broke onto the scene in the early 2010s. Two days later, however, J. Cole expressed regret for dissing Kendrick Lamar, and apologized to him while performing at a festival. Then, five days after his apology, the title *Might Delete Later* became prophetic: J. Cole deleted "7 Minute Drill" from streaming services. From this point forward, he was no longer involved in the feud.

The same day "7 Minute Drill" was removed from streaming, Metro Boomin and Future followed up *We Don't Trust You* with its sequel, *We Still Don't Trust You*. While it lacked another verse from Kendrick Lamar, it did have guest appearances from A\$AP Rocky and The Weeknd. Both of these artists had their own history with Drake—A\$AP Rocky was, and still is, dating Rihanna, who Drake had previously tried to pursue, and The Weeknd had been friends with Drake in the early 2010s but fell out after a failed record deal—and dissed him on their features. On "Show of Hands," A\$AP Rocky bragged that he ended up with Rihanna instead of Drake, and called the quality of Drake's recent releases into question. On "All to Myself," The Weeknd made fun of the people in Drake's inner circle and questioned their loyalty, while also suggesting that he was grateful he had not signed with OVO, Drake's record label.

Escalation

The following day, April 13, "Push Ups" by Drake was leaked. The song was Drake's response to "Like That" and the feud's other songs, and was the most targeted song to come out of the feud up to that point. On the song, Drake made fun of Kendrick for his small stature and his record deal that forced him to give 50% of his earnings from his music to his record label, and asserted that Kendrick was not the authentic rapper he claimed to be given his willingness to make songs with Taylor Swift and other mainstream artists for a quick check. Drake also dissed The Weeknd and Rick Ross, calling The Weeknd too soft to diss anyone and attacking Rick Ross—who had been silent up to this point, save for unfollowing Drake on Instagram after *We Don't Trust You* released—for previously working as a correctional officer. After its immediate leak, some felt "Push Ups" was made with artificial intelligence because of the leak's low audio quality, but when it was officially released on April 19, these rumors were

dispelled. “Push Ups” was the first true diss track of the feud, and it meant there was no going back.

Nearly hours after its initial leak, Rick Ross responded to “Push Ups” with “Champagne Moments.” On the song, he criticized Drake for supposedly using ghostwriters, bragged about being richer than Drake (while also suggesting Drake was not nearly as rich as he wanted everyone to think), and theorized that Drake had gotten plastic surgery. The song received some attention, but not nearly as much as any of the songs related to Kendrick Lamar.

Alongside the official release of “Push Ups,” Drake dropped “Taylor Made Freestyle” on his social media accounts. The song received most of its attention for using AI-generated vocals of 2Pac and Snoop Dogg, two of Kendrick Lamar’s West Coast idols. The song’s disses were largely a continuation of those from “Push Ups,” with more criticism of Kendrick for collaborating with Taylor Swift. The song’s more sparse new attacks included the idea that Kendrick was unfit to succeed 2Pac or Snoop Dogg as the kingpin of West Coast rap, and provocations towards the other artists involved in the feud. Unsurprisingly, the song’s use of AI received significant backlash, with 2Pac’s estate sending Drake a cease-and-desist letter threatening legal action unless Drake deleted the song from his social media.

Eleven days later, on April 30, Kendrick Lamar responded with “euphoria.” The song was Kendrick’s first entirely focused on Drake, and attacked him for his style, being a hypocrite and insecure, trying to act tough, supposedly getting plastic surgery to make his abs look bigger, using a seemingly exaggerated Toronto regional accent, and a whole host of other topics. “euphoria” became the most popular song of the feud thus far, even being used by then-President Joe Biden in a video for his re-election campaign. It was followed on May 3 by “6:16 in LA,” another diss track by Kendrick Lamar directed at Drake—though this time only released on social media. The song’s biggest takeaway was that there were supposedly disloyal figures in Drake’s inner circle who were leaking information about him to Kendrick, information that would be revealed publicly if Drake escalated the feud any further. It was effectively a warning shot, giving Drake a chance to back out of the feud less it be escalated further, and more damning information be put into the light.

The same day Kendrick Lamar released “6:16 in LA” on his social media, Drake released “Family Matters.” The song, which was over 7 minutes and featured 3 separate sections, was exactly the escalation Kendrick Lamar warned against in “6:16 in LA,” with disses more hostile and accusations more serious than any song thus far. These disses included attacks on Kendrick Lamar for supposed contradictions in his racial politics, allegations that Kendrick abused his fiancée and that he was not the father to her child, provocations for Kendrick to provide actual evidence that members of Drake’s crew were feeding him information, and of course, more references to Kendrick being short. The song also addressed the other artists who had dissed Drake along the way—including Rick Ross, The Weeknd, A\$AP Rocky, and Metro Boomin—with disses

that again criticized Rick Ross for working as a correctional officer (as well as being overweight), alleged that Metro Boomin's girlfriend was unfaithful, suggested that The Weeknd's diss tracks were hard to take seriously because he is a pop star, and reminded A\$AP Rocky that his girlfriend was with Drake first. The song was accompanied by a music video with additional diss tracks toward Kendrick, and both the song and its video were critically well-received. "Family Matters" effectively leveled the playing field—Drake's attacks on every artist other than Kendrick Lamar were enough to silence them, making the feud solely about his beef with Kendrick. For Kendrick, however, "Family Matters" was hardly enough.

Kendrick's Response

Not even an hour after "Family Matters" was released, Kendrick Lamar snatched the spotlight from Drake by releasing "meet the grahams." In the 6-minute song, Kendrick dissed Drake for being a deadbeat father, generally misogynistic, predatory, keeping sexual predators in his inner circle, allegedly hiding a daughter, and having problems with gambling, alcohol, and drugs, among other attacks. Things were personal now: Kendrick wasn't just attacking Drake for his style or how he acted in his songs, he was alleging that Drake had long-standing insecurities and other personal demons that the feud would bring to light and force Drake to address. The song's lasting reputation is one of brutality—but Kendrick was not done yet.

The following day, May 4, Kendrick Lamar released "Not Like Us." This song was effectively the nail in the coffin for Drake, would be crowned the song of the summer by some publications, and became the defining song of the feud. The song's actual diss tracks were largely continuations of those from "meet the grahams," with significant time given to accusing Drake and his crew of predatory behavior, telling Drake to stop speaking poorly on West Coast figures associated with Kendrick (such as DeMar DeRozan or Serena Williams), and calling Drake a culture vulture for collaborating with Atlanta rappers purely to make money, among other diss tracks. More importantly, however, "Not Like Us" was catchy and capable of becoming a hit—and this it did, becoming the 6th most popular song in the United States in 2024. It would also win 4 Grammy Awards, including Record and Song of the Year, plus a fifth for its music video that would release at a later date. With "meet the grahams" and now this, all eyes were on Drake to respond—could he turn the tide back in his favor?



De-Escalation

Right before Drake responded, however, Metro Boomin decided to make his own individual contribution to the feud. On May 5, he released "BBL Drizzy," a beat that

sampled AI-generated vocals (that were initially from a video created by Internet comedian King Willonius on April 14) making fun of Drake for supposedly getting a BBL, on SoundCloud. Metro Boomin also offered \$10,000 to whoever had the best verse over the beat. Drake himself would eventually rap over the beat, and it would become a popular sound on TikTok and Instagram Reels. But on its initial release date, it would be overshadowed by a different song.

The same day, May 5, Drake responded on social media to “meet the grahams” and “Not Like Us” with “The Heart Part 6.” Critics and the general public did *not* like this song, and felt its defenses against the allegations Kendrick had levied at Drake made no sense and contradicted themselves. The song itself expanded on Drake’s accusations that Kendrick had abused his fiancée and that she had fathered a child with Dave Free (Kendrick’s friend and collaborator), as well as denying Kendrick’s allegations. The song also alleged that Kendrick was intentionally fed false information about Drake’s crew by Drake himself, but there was no proof of such notions. Furthermore, the song inexplicably brought Drake’s past allegations of grooming Millie Bobby Brown into conversation, despite Kendrick never bringing this topic up in any of his diss tracks.

The feud could not have had two more different outcomes for its two central artists. On one hand, Kendrick Lamar enjoyed critical acclaim across all of his songs, backing from major figures in the music industry and pop culture (including some who were previously friends with Drake), and chart-topping popularity, and his success story was not done yet. On the other hand, Drake’s songs received mixed results from critics, and he had little support from industry figures beyond his most prominent loyalists. Moreover, because “The Heart Part 6” was such a failure, Drake effectively squandered any chance he had to win the feud. He could not even win the numbers game, something he was previously known for—indeed, it was his ability to make a diss song that was also a catchy hit that allowed him to defeat Meek Mill in a feud back in 2015. On June 4, Drake deleted “The Heart Part 6” from his social media, effectively surrendering to Kendrick. On June 5, his posts promoting his other diss songs were deleted as well. The songs that were released on streaming services, “Push Ups” and “Family Matters,” remain there to this day.

Kendrick’s Victory Tour

Before Kendrick began what would become a nearly year-long victory lap, Drake attempted to move on from the feud. First, it was by making light of it by rapping over the “BBL Drizzy” beat on a guest verse on Sexyy Red’s “U My Everything.” Then, it was by pivoting completely by switching genres for his next few songs. On June 3, the day before he began deleting his social media posts with the diss tracks, Drake featured on Internet comedian Snowd4y’s “Wah Gwan Delilah.” The song was a parody of “Hey There Delilah” done with heavily exaggerated Toronto slang in a heavily exaggerated Toronto accent, and it shocked so much of the general public that many first believed

Drake's verse was AI-generated. Unsurprisingly, the song was received negatively, with many finding it annoying or unfunny, and others seeing it as evidence that Drake had really fallen off the deep end after the feud. On June 28, he had two guest appearances on Camila Cabello's album *C,XOXO* on the songs "HOT UPTOWN" and "Uuugly." These two songs were blends of RnB and house, and were certainly received better than "Wah Gwan Delilah," but they did not do the same chart-topping numbers that songs with Drake features had done in the past.

Kendrick, on the other hand, did not make any effort to move on from the feud, and rode a wave of success that would bring his career to new heights. This wave began



on Juneteenth, where he performed his "The Pop Out: Ken & Friends" concert in Los Angeles. The concert was a celebration of West Coast hip-hop (as well as its apparent victory in the Drake-Kendrick feud), and featured appearances from major West Coast artists including YG, Mustard, Steve Lacy, Tyler the Creator, Roddy Ricch, ScHoolboy

Q, Dr. Dre, and Ty Dolla \$ign. The concert was also Kendrick's first time performing any of his diss tracks live, and he performed four: "Like That," "euphoria," "6:16 in LA," and "Not Like Us" (which was performed 5 times in a row). In attendance were numerous celebrities, including LeBron James, DeMar DeRozan, Russell Westbrook, James Harden, SZA, Rick Ross, The Weeknd, Anthony "Top Dawg" Tiffith, North West, Rosalía, LaKeith Stanfield, Ayo Edebiri, and Chloe Bailey. Some of these figures—most notably DeMar DeRozan, LeBron James, and SZA—were former friends of Drake. The concert was extraordinarily well-received by critics, who felt it was a strong celebration of West Coast hip-hop, though Dr. Dre's appearance was controversial due to his history of domestic abuse. In the context of the feud, the concert brought a whole stadium together to rap along to diss tracks against Drake, and much of the rap community followed in support.

Kendrick continued his victory lap on another major US holiday, releasing the "Not Like Us" music video on July 4. The music video featured numerous allusions to the feud, including Kendrick hitting an owl piñata (the symbol of OVO Sound), doing push ups (in response to Drake ordering him to "drop and give me 50"), dancing with his fiancée with their child (who Drake had alleged was not Kendrick's), and rapping the "A Minor" line alongside a screaming crowd. The video also featured numerous Compton landmarks, cameos from LA-associated figures including DeMar DeRozan and Mustard (who produced "Not Like Us"), and other images celebrating Kendrick's West

Coast upbringing. The video was, like its preceding concert, extremely well-received and viewed as another sign of Kendrick's victory over Drake.

Following the music video, there was a nearly two-month gap in developments in the feud, the longest since its early rumblings back in 2023. On September 8, 2024, Kendrick was announced as the headliner for the Super Bowl LIX halftime show. The announcement was yet another sign of his victory, and yet another blow to Drake. Three days later, on September 11, Kendrick released "Watch the Party Die" on social media, a song that critiqued the music industry's obsession with luxury and superficial signs of success and argued for hip-hop culture to instead prioritize music with more to say about deeper topics. While not a diss track on Drake per se, the images of luxury and materialism that Kendrick attacked are commonly associated with Drake, while the themes he argued needed to be at the forefront of rap music are associated with him. Kendrick seemed to view the feud, given that it represented a victory of his brand of rap over Drake's, as a jumping-off point to shift the music industry's priorities with respect to rap.

Continuing his victory tour, on November 22, 2024, Kendrick surprise-released *GNX* to critical acclaim. It was the first post-feud album from any of the artists involved (excluding a quickly forgotten mixtape from Future), and featured three songs that would chart within the top 2 in the United States: "luther," "squabble up," and "tv off." While little reference was made to the feud on the album, it was yet another piece of Kendrick's victory lap that, like his concert and the "Not Like Us" music video, celebrated West Coast hip-hop. Kendrick at this point was unstoppable, and it seemed the media and general public were eating up everything he put out. Drake, however, fared a lot differently.

Drake's Lawsuits

Three days after the release of *GNX*, on November 25, 2024, Drake filed a petition against record label Universal Music Group (UMG) and Spotify alleging that they used artificial streams to inflate the popularity of "Not Like Us." Notably, both Drake and Kendrick were signed to UMG at the time. The petition accused the two companies of violating the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act by quietly conspiring to boost the numbers of "Not Like Us." UMG and Spotify of course denied any wrongdoing. The public's response to Drake's lawsuit was largely negative, with many feeling it represented him being a sore loser.

Drake eventually withdrew the petition on January 14, 2025, but he was not done with legal action against "Not Like Us." On January 15, he sued UMG for defamation, alleging that his home had become a target for burglaries as a result of "Not Like Us." This lawsuit was significant because, were it to go to trial, the truthfulness of the lyrics of "Not Like Us" would be called into question. More importantly, it would represent the biggest instance of rap lyrics being used in court ever. Using rap lyrics in court is largely frowned upon by members of the rap community because lyrics are often artistic

expressions or exaggerated. Therefore, treating artists themselves as the same figure they present in their music, as both character evidence and evidence of crimes they may or may not have committed, is criticized. For Drake to bring the “Not Like Us” lyrics into a defamation suit was to go against this, and if his suit were successful, it could have had a major impact on what lyrics artists include in their songs going forward.

Final Developments

While Drake was busy with the law, Kendrick was continuing to celebrate win after win. On February 2, 2025, “Not Like Us” won 5 Grammy Awards (every single award it was nominated for), including the two most prestigious awards for an individual song. On February 9, he headlined the Super Bowl LIX halftime show, and wove disses on Drake into his performance. These included referencing and criticizing Drake’s lawsuit, wearing a chain with an A-minor pendant, bringing in Serena Williams (who supposedly dated Drake in the past) to dance, and of course, performing “Not Like Us.” The reception to the halftime show was unsurprisingly positive.

5 days later, on Valentine’s Day, Drake released *Some \$exy \$ongs 4 U*, a collaborative album with PartyNextDoor that was his first album since the feud began. The album was largely a departure from the feud, and rap altogether, instead featuring slow, moody RnB songs. Occasional references were made to the feud, including Drake singing the words “they’re not like us” once, but it was clear his goal with the album was to put the feud in the past by departing from the hard-hitting rap songs that came out of it. The album was successful, and became Drake’s 14th number-one album on the Billboard album charts, but compared to the numbers of Drake’s pre-feud albums, it was hardly something to write home about. Combined with his guest appearances on *C,XOXO*, it became clear the feud had impacted Drake’s influence on popular music. Drake songs, albums, and guest verses were practically guaranteed hits that would stay popular for a long time before the feud, but Kendrick effectively ended that guarantee.

On March 17, UMG filed to have Drake’s defamation suit dismissed. On October 9, Judge Jeannette Vargas sided with UMG and dismissed the suit in a 38-page ruling. Judge Vargas argued Kendrick’s disses on Drake in “Not Like Us” could not be considered defamatory because they were matters of opinion. UMG responded to the ruling by calling Drake’s lawsuit “an affront to all artists and their creative expression.” UMG, as Drake’s label, did also note that it looked forward to continuing work with Drake. Drake responded by appealing the dismissal, and the appeal has yet to be taken up by a judge. In practice, however, many operate as if the dismissal was final—the lawsuit was seen as being in poor taste from the getgo, and its appeal is treated as the end of Drake’s attempts to retroactively win the feud by proving Kendrick wrong.

On February 1, 2026, Kendrick celebrated the final stop in his victory tour (for now) by winning 4 Grammy Awards for *GNX* and its songs “luther” and “tv off.” By this point, he had cemented himself as rap’s biggest star, as well as the guy who won Grammys with Drake’s ex-girlfriend.

Finally, on May 15, 2026, Drake released *Iceman*, *Habibti*, and *Maid of Honour* simultaneously. While *Habibti* and *Maid of Honour* did not mention the feud, *Iceman* made numerous references to it, including disses on those—such as LeBron James—who had “switched up” on Drake as a result of the feud, continuations of disses on Kendrick, and mentions of the lawsuit. *Iceman* did, however, see Drake and Future reconcile and appear together on “Ran to Atlanta.” Critics were generally negative on *Iceman*, largely due to it representing Drake’s inability to move on from the feud, but were more favorable on *Habibti* and *Maid of Honour*, feeling they took more risks. The general public was the opposite, seeing *Iceman* as the closest thing to a return-to-form for Drake since the feud ended. All three albums were successful, debuting at #1 (*Iceman*), #2 (*Habibti*), and #3 (*Maid of Honour*) on the Billboard album chart, making Drake the first artist ever to occupy the top 3 spots. However, like *Some \$exy \$ongs 4 U*, the album lacked the long-term popularity of Drake’s earlier works.

Current Problems

Lyrics in Court

Using lyrics in court is not a new practice—more than 800 criminal cases have used lyrics as evidence in a trial. However, the issue has been brought to its biggest stage yet by the Drake-Kendrick feud. While Drake’s lawsuit was—at least for the time being—unsuccessful, the issue is now on the top of the rap community’s mind. If the lyrics of one of the biggest rap songs of the 2020s were to be questioned in court, there could be major ramifications to how artists write lyrics and the direction rap culture takes as a whole.

On one side, individuals like Drake support using lyrics in court because of their clear, real-world consequences. While rappers might be expressing opinions or putting on personas in their songs, these opinions and personas can directly harm others in tangible ways, such as Drake’s home being a target for break-ins. Others argue that song lyrics are literal confessions and can be easy ways to link artists to criminal activity. Beyond being used for their descriptions of crimes, song lyrics here are seen as methods of establishing motives to commit crimes or gang affiliations.

On the other hand, critics argue that because rap music has become lyrically more violent as it has grown in popularity, artists often exaggerate their actions or put on personas in their songs. Therefore, descriptions of crimes or gang affiliations, or even accusations that Drake is a sexual predator depending on who you ask, are not seen as being entirely literal, and thus inadmissible in court. Additionally, since lyrics are primarily used in court when rappers are on trial, critics assert that lyrics in court are primarily used against Black defendants to portray them as violent or aggressive. Therefore, using lyrics in court is seen by some as a racist practice.

Artificial Streams

With Drake’s allegations that “Not Like Us” was boosted by artificial streams, the “bot stream” issue was brought to the forefront of music culture. With the growth of artificial intelligence and the automation of certain tasks, the music industry was naturally impacted. “Streaming bots” artificially inflate a song’s streaming numbers in order to make it more popular than it would be if only real humans were listening to it. Artists earn money on streaming services based on a royalty pool split by percentages based on who is streamed the most, so artificial streams can directly cause artists to lose money. Additionally, pieces of streaming service algorithms (such as Spotify’s recommendations for listeners) can be impacted by fake data on what songs are popular or liked by audiences of specific genres. Finally, of course, artificial streams make popular music irreflective of what actual consumers are actually listening to.

The consensus on artificial streams is overwhelmingly negative. Streaming services like Spotify pursue and remove streams they deem to be artificial, and

musicians of course oppose any fake attempts to skew a song's popularity (even their own, from an integrity standpoint as well as the risk of being penalized by streaming services). The issue does, however, bring up the larger question of artificial intelligence in music. Many artists are starting to use AI to come up with lyrics, or even make music outright. While critics and fans alike are still generally against this practice, artists themselves are a bit more supportive.

The Future of the Feud

In 2018, rap became the most popular genre of music in the United States, and dominated the charts. However, after reaching that peak, rap trickled off, and by 2023, it was back to sharing the top of the charts with pop music. In 2024, after the feud, rap was back firmly on top. The feud was certainly an effective way for its involved artists to make money and grow their names, but two years have passed. The music industry is now at a crossroads: moving on from the feud could be good for artists on the winning side to show they are not one-trick ponies, and it could also be good for artists on the losing side to show they are bigger than just one beef. On the other hand, the feud was such a cultural phenomenon that speaking about it is guaranteed attention—after all, significant attention went to Drake's references to the feud on *Iceman*. So far, in 2026, rap is once again tied with pop as the most popular genre of music in the United States. If rap wants to hold onto its dominance, the industry will have to decide how to use the feud's popularity boost—if at all—in order to help secure it.

Shifting Alliances

As a result of the feud, the alliances that previously defined the music industry, and popular culture, are gone. Drake and LeBron James, the two biggest stars in their respective fields, are no longer friends. Drake was, for a time, at odds with close friend Future, and is still at odds with former close friends Rick Ross, DeMar DeRozan, and SZA. Rihanna, who Drake used to crush on, is now dating his rival, A\$AP Rocky. Metro Boomin still hates Drake, but is friends with 21 Savage, who is friends with Drake. A complex web of alliances and person-to-person beefs has emerged, and it is up to every person to navigate these alliances as they figure out their own best course of action following the feud.

State of Committee

It is May 2026, and Drake has just released *Iceman*, *Habibti*, and *Maid of Honour*. *Iceman* brought the feud back into the public eye, and music listeners are wondering how—if at all—their favorite rappers and other figures are going to respond to it. Drake has also just rekindled his friendship with Future while maintaining his distaste with LeBron James for siding with Kendrick, showing that the conflicts started by the feud between individual figures may not, but certainly can, last. The questions left by Drake's defamation lawsuit and allegations of artificial streams still remain, and as more and more songs are used in court cases and artificial intelligence gets smarter and smarter and more difficult to detect, the music industry must act quickly to ensure these issues are dealt with in a way that the artists themselves, as well as other relevant figures, support. The musicians in this committee, with consultation from NBA players and other figures, need to decide what to do next in order to maintain rap's cultural dominance, resolve the legal questions raised by the feud, and figure out where they stand amidst the redrawn alliances that came from the feud.

Questions to Consider

1. Should song lyrics be protected speech, or should artists be able to bring them to court for issues like defamation?
2. Should music streaming platforms like Spotify permit artificially-generated streams, or should these “bot streams” be disallowed?
3. How can rappers, and their record labels, maintain popularity and cultural relevance now that the feud has died down?
4. What role should those outside of the music industry, like NBA players or social media influencers, have in its affairs after the feud revealed they could be a powerful tool for generating buzz around songs/events?
5. Should the music industry move on from the feud, or keep it in the public discourse? Should Drake and Kendrick themselves move on?

Position List

1. J. Cole

“Love when they argue the hardest MC, is it K-Dot, is it Aubrey, or me?”

The rapper whose guest feature on “First Person Shooter” helped escalate the feud from periodical, one-off diss tracks to a full-blown brawl, J. Cole was—for a brief period of time—its third-most important player. It should be noted, however, that J. Cole did not actually diss anyone on this song and merely made a comparison between himself, Kendrick, and Drake that Kendrick did not support. He was briefly on Drake’s side and released a diss track on Kendrick Lamar, but removed it from streaming services a few days later and bowed out of the feud, but that is not to say he could not get involved again in some other way were he to deem it a good course of action.

2. Metro Boomin

“If young Metro don’t trust you I’m gon’ shoot you”

The rap producer behind the collaborative album *We Don’t Trust You*, which featured the song “Like That,” Metro Boomin was the central figure on Kendrick Lamar’s side of the feud, save for Kendrick Lamar himself. Metro Boomin and Drake have long been on poor terms publicly (since about 2022) due to Metro’s frustrations over Grammy losses and other private disagreements, and he would go on to produce a beat called “BBL Drizzy” that featured a sample making fun of Drake for supposedly having a BBL. As one of Kendrick’s biggest supporters, it is up to Metro Boomin to decide how to respond to Drake’s supposed inability to forget the feud that he revealed on *Iceman*.

3. Future

“Me and Hendrix back by popular demand”

The rapper behind the collaborative album *We Don’t Trust You*, Future split with Drake during the feud and after, before reigniting his friendship with “Ran to Atlanta” in 2026. Future and Drake released a collaborative album in 2015 and continued to release songs together quite often as late as 2022, but fell out for reasons unknown. He became associated with Kendrick and Metro Boomin due to his involvement on “Like That,” and sneak disses thrown at Drake on *We Don’t Trust You* (and its follow-up, *We Still Don’t Trust You*). Now, with Future friends with Drake again, but still holding the relationships he made with Metro Boomin and other pro-Kendrick figures by association, Future finds himself in a precarious position as he continues to release music.

4. Rick Ross

“We farming our own chickens...Quack quack”

A rapper and former friend of Drake, Rick Ross is one of rap’s most notorious figures. From serving as a correctional officer in the late 1990s to making fake stories in his music about dealing drugs in the 2000s to owning a table with a Boeing 747 engine as its stand and gifting his son a Wingstop franchise for his birthday in the 2020s, he has established himself as quite the character. He routinely featured on each Drake’s songs and vice versa, and his involvement in the feud was largely seen as a ploy for attention. He released the diss track “Champagne Moments” on Drake, but the song was largely forgotten in the midst of the other, more important diss tracks. He did, however, coin the phrase “BBL Drizzy,” which would end up being the basis for Metro Boomin’s diss beat on Drake.

5. DJ Akademiks

“What top 5 you smokin’ on Kendrick? Cuz my top 5 is Drake, Drake, Drake, Drake, Drake!”

A podcaster and Internet personality who mostly covers rap music, DJ Akademiks has long been known for his aggressive defending of Drake. He was one of the most ardent supporters of Drake during the feud, publicly and outspokenly siding with Drake when very few—if any—other industry figures did the same. Now, with the general public warming up to Drake a bit two years removed from the feud, DJ Akademiks’s standing as the number one Drake fan is no longer a given, and he must decide how he can stay relevant as the music industry changes.

6. 21 Savage

“I jump on your song and make you sound like you the feature”

A rapper and friend of Drake and Metro Boomin, 21 Savage is in a difficult position following the feud because his two closest friends in rap music are at odds with one another. Prior to the feud, he had released separate collaborative albums with Drake and Metro Boomin, and chose to stay out of the beef largely to avoid picking a side between the two. He has since released songs with both artists, indicating he has remained on good terms with them both since the beef ended. That said, he did try to advise Drake to not continue the feud with Kendrick Lamar, though Drake of course ignored that advice.

7. Snowd4y

“And ooh, if you tryna hit a lick on the TD, RBC, Scotiabank, RBC, CIBC, PC Financial, holler at me”

An Internet comedian primarily known for skits and street interviews making fun of the (admittedly exaggerated) Toronto accent, Snowd4y is one of Toronto’s most polarizing figures. He and Drake released “Wah Gwan Delilah,” a parody of “Hey There Delilah” done in the Toronto accent. The song was one of Drake’s first releases after the feud, and it was largely criticized as annoying and proof that Drake had lost the feud. Some instead felt the song was meant to be taken as a joke, but were still confused why Drake would choose to release such a song so soon after losing the feud. With his name being largely forgotten after “Wah Gwan Delilah” stopped being talked about, Snowd4y must now figure out how to rebuild his popularity in the wake of *Iceman*.

8. DeMar DeRozan

“DeMar I say it, DaLess I like it”

An NBA player who grew up with Kendrick Lamar in Compton, DeMar DeRozan has long been one of the artist’s closest friends outside of rap. DeRozan, however, was also friends with Drake during his time playing for the Toronto Raptors, Drake’s hometown team and the team for which he is a global ambassador. After leaving Toronto, he participated in Kendrick Lamar’s “The Pop Out: Ken and Friends” concert and made an appearance in the “Not Like Us” music video. Drake has insinuated that these actions constitute a falling out between him and DeRozan, but DeRozan maintains that there is no bad blood between the two. Whether or not he will be able to convince Drake of such a notion, however, is a different question.

9. The Weeknd

“I thank God that I never signed my life away”

A pop/RnB singer and former friend of fellow Toronto native Drake, The Weeknd has been responsible for some of the most popular and influential songs of the past decade and a half. Prior to the feud, he had collaborated with Drake on some songs in the early 2010s, but fell out after a failed record deal with OVO Sound, Drake’s label. He threw diss tracks at Drake as a guest feature on the song “All To Myself” from *We Still Don’t Trust You*, but other than that has kept mostly quiet about his own personal issues with Drake. It seems now that The Weeknd is hardly upset about not signing with OVO, but for Toronto’s two biggest artists to be at odds with one another is significant for both the city and its image in popular culture.

10. Noah “40” Shebib

“You know 40 wants peace but I’m down to cut ties for it”

A rap producer and record executive, 40 has been Drake’s closest associate in the music industry since Drake became popular. He co-founded the record label OVO Sound with Drake in 2009, and has been the primary producer behind many of the label’s releases since, including most of Drake’s releases. He was notably completely silent during the Drake-Kendrick feud, and from the feud until the release of *Iceman* and *Habibti* did not produce a single song for Drake. Many speculate this is due to him having multiple sclerosis and prioritizing his health, but there is no concrete information on 40 and Drake’s gap in collaborations. It seems now that 40 is in better health, and ready to once again take on a significant role in Drake’s career and the work of OVO Sound.

11. Anthony “Top Dawg” Tiffith

“This battle is over. A win for the culture, while keeping it all on wax”

A rap producer and record executive, Top Dawg has long been a close associate of Kendrick Lamar throughout Kendrick’s career. He founded Top Dawg Entertainment (TDE) in 2004, which Kendrick Lamar was signed to from 2005-2022. Kendrick left TDE not on bad terms with Top Dawg, but to gain total creative control over his music. Top Dawg did not have a direct role in the feud, and publicly supported Kendrick Lamar but stopped short of being directly involved. He did, however, call the feud a victory for both Kendrick and rap culture as a whole.

12. LeBron James

“Up late thinking about life. What’s my purpose while I’m here”

The greatest basketball player of all time, LeBron James had a long-standing friendship with Drake due to their star power and extremely successful careers. Drake would routinely shout James out on his songs, however, after James attended Kendrick Lamar’s “The Pop Out: Ken and Friends” concert, Drake would diss him and cover his tattoo of James with one of Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, an NBA player from Toronto. Drake then dissed LeBron on “Make Them Remember” from *Iceman* for switching teams throughout his career (like he supposedly did with Drake), and the two continue to be on poor terms. Having just signed with the 76ers, LeBron has shown that he continues to generate massive buzz from every action he takes or statement he makes, giving him the perfect opportunity to put out an influential response to *Iceman*.

13. SZA

“Cuz I used to date SZA back in ‘08”

An RnB singer who briefly dated Drake in the 2000s, SZA is now a close friend of Kendrick Lamar. She is signed to Top Dawg Entertainment, and created the songs “luther” and “30 for 30” with Kendrick Lamar after the feud, both of which—especially

the former—became wildly popular. She also appeared as a guest during Kendrick’s Super Bowl halftime show performance. She did not say anything during the feud, but some have speculated that particular comments of hers made after the feud indicated a distaste for Drake. Where SZA truly stands, however, is somewhat of a mystery—for now.

14. PartyNextDoor

“And Party at the party playin’ with his nose now”

An RnB singer who is a close associate of Drake, PartyNextDoor was the first artist to sign to OVO Sound in 2013. After the feud ended, he and Drake released the collaborative album *\$ome \$exy \$ongs 4 U*, Drake’s first major release after the feud, which made one-off references to the feud but generally tried to distance itself from it. PartyNextDoor notably did not say anything during the feud, which confused many due to his relationship with Drake and the fact that he was dissed on “Not Like Us,” but others felt his actions were in line with his low-profile public persona. Whether or not he will maintain that persona going forward, however, is a different question.

15. Boi-1da

“Boi-1da send beat and I’ll kill you for fun”

A rap producer who has been a close ally of Drake since joining OVO Sound in 2012, Boi-1da was the primary producer behind all of Drake’s songs released during the feud, from the acclaimed “Family Matters” to the mocked and ridiculed “The Heart Part 6.” He also produced many of Drake’s prior songs, but notably has not had a role on any of Drake’s albums since. There is no indication of bad blood between the two, especially given that Boi-1da was a key ally of Drake during a time when that was hardly a position to strive for, but Boi-1da is certainly in the position to re-assert or change his relationship with Drake after *Iceman*.

16. Mustard

“Sike!”

A rap producer who aligned himself with Kendrick Lamar during the feud, Mustard produced the feud’s defining song, “Not Like Us.” He would later produce other songs for Kendrick Lamar, most notably “tv off,” but his lack of a relationship with either artist before the feud makes his centrality to the feud unique. In making “Not Like Us,” it seems Mustard’s goal was less about dissing Drake, and more about making a year-defining summer hit, a goal he certainly achieved.

17. A\$AP Rocky

“I just bagged the worst one”

A rapper who was formerly friends with Drake, A\$AP Rocky is the boyfriend of Rihanna. As a result of his relationship with her, he fell out with Drake. Rocky would diss Drake on a guest feature on the song “Show Of Hands,” followed by his own song “Highjack.” Rocky’s disses were largely forgotten in the grand scheme of the feud, primarily consisted of saying he stole Drake’s girl, and received less intense responses from Drake than those of Rick Ross or The Weeknd, for example, but his role in the feud is still interesting because his personal issues with Drake come from a unique place.

18. Russell Westbrook

“Ol’ triple-double Russ face, watch with the bust face”

An NBA player who participated in Kendrick Lamar’s “The Pop Out: Ken and Friends” concert, Russell Westbrook is one of the greatest basketball players of the 2010s. Westbrook has been a long friend of Kendrick, though his role in the feud is less personal than most of the people in this committee, as he likely just wanted to participate in the concert to support his friend and capitalize on an important cultural moment. How he will capitalize on the feud’s renewed attention remains to be seen.

19. Dave Free

“I heard that one of ‘em lil’ kids might be Dave Freeeeeeee”

A music video director and former producer at Top Dawg Entertainment, Dave Free co-founded pgLang, a creative communications company, with Kendrick Lamar in 2019 after leaving TDE. Drake alleged him to be the true father of Kendrick’s child on “Family Matters,” and Kendrick would respond to this by tapping Free to co-direct the “Not Like Us” music video, which helped solidify Kendrick’s victory in the feud and won the duo numerous awards.

20. Chubbs

“They tell me Chubbs the only one that get your hand-me-downs”

As Drake’s head of security, Chubbs is responsible for making sure Drake is safe physically—but maybe not verbally. Despite being photographed with and shouted out by Drake numerous times, very little is known about him publicly, and he has only ever done a single interview. Kendrick Lamar implicitly questioned Chubbs’ loyalty to Drake on “euphoria,” and accused Drake of having a stronger relationship with Chubbs than his own family on “Not Like Us.” Chubbs lives an extremely private life, yet still maintains significant influence due to his status with Drake.