**Who Owns That Song: The Jims Brothers or The FrontStreet Boys?**

There are two music groups getting critical praise. The FrontStreet Boys is a group of young men who met in college and started singing together. A record executive from Mega Records was at an early performance, loved what she heard, and signed the FrontStreet Boys. Since then, the Boys have been led by Mega Records through training, “image consulting,” and recording. Mega Records covered all costs and the FrontStreet Boys are now bringing in millions of dollars to the record company, with the Boys getting a share. The Boys gave up their college scholarships to pursue their music careers.

The Jims Brothers are three teenage brothers who have been singing together for years at family and community events. Their parents bought the Brothers all of their instruments and recording equipment. The Jims Brothers record their own music and release it through YouTube and their Web site. They never included copyright notices or restrictions on the site. The Brothers are on track to attend medical school and become doctors in their father’s very successful medical practice. They aren’t making music to make money; they merely want to share their passion with the world. Recently, the Brothers heard a FrontStreet Boys song currently climbing the charts that sounds, to the Brothers, like one they wrote, recorded, and released a year ago. They had their attorney contact the FrontStreet Boys’ agent to complain. However, the FrontStreet Boys say that the song is theirs and they are the first to release it commercially.

Discussion Questions

1. The Jims Brothers are upset. Why?
2. What should the Jims Brothers do next?
3. The Jims Brothers are thinking about filing a lawsuit against the FrontStreet Boys. How might they prove ownership of the song? Do you think it would be different if the Jims Brothers had put any restrictions on their music or not released it for free? What if the Boys gave the Brothers credit?
4. How might the Boys and the Brothers have avoided this conflict altogether?