



The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop

By Dan Charnas

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“There has never been a better book about hip-hop...a record-biz portrait that jumps off the page.”—*A.V. Club*

THE INSPIRATION FOR THE VH1 SERIES *THE BREAKS*

The Big Payback takes readers from the first \$15 made by a “rapping DJ” in 1970s New York to the multi-million-dollar sales of the Phat Farm and Roc-a-Wear clothing companies in 2004 and 2007. On this four-decade-long journey from the studios where the first rap records were made to the boardrooms where the big deals were inked, *The Big Payback* tallies the list of who lost and who won. Read the secret histories of the early long-shot successes of Sugar Hill Records and Grandmaster Flash, Run DMC's crossover breakthrough on MTV, the marketing of gangsta rap, and the rise of artist/ entrepreneurs like Jay-Z and Sean “Diddy” Combs.

300 industry giants like Def Jam founders Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons gave their stories to renowned hip-hop journalist Dan Charnas, who provides a compelling, never-before-seen, myth-debunking view into the victories, defeats, corporate clashes, and street battles along the 40-year road to hip-hop's dominance.

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The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop By Dan Charnas Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Charnas tells the story of hip-hop in this stylish, lavishly detailed love letter to the genre and industry. He follows the money and the relationship between artist and merchant—who, in hip-hop, are often one and the same—from hip-hop's early days as a marginal urban subculture in Harlem of the late 1960s to its insinuation into—and eventual domination of—mainstream popular music. Charnas makes an elegant case for how hip-hop is the consummate American art form, one that reflects American society in all its volubility and violence—as well as possessing the power to alter it. In its promise of economic security and creative control for black artist-entrepreneurs, it is the culmination of the dreams of black nationalists and civil rights leaders. Charnas spent seven years working for Rick Rubin, famed producer and cofounder of Def Jam Records, and writes with the authority of an insider, the passion of a fan, and the cool eye of someone who has maneuvered through the day-to-day working of the business. Nuanced treatment of the impresarios behind signature sounds and recording empires, and brisk, dramatic vignettes, give this history of a leaderless revolution impressive momentum. (Jan.)

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Review

“Pulitzer-level reporting.”—*Spin*

“A classic of music business dirt-digging as well as a kind of pulp epic.”—*Rolling Stone* (4-star review)

“As gripping and dense as a prime Jay-Z rhyme...Charnas has done a real service to pop history.”—*New York Daily News*

“Detailed and colorful...a must-read for fans of the music industry.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“The rap tome you have to read...*The Big Payback* focuses not on the beefs you know but on the back-room battles you don't.”—*Details*

“[An] exhaustive, engrossing history of the genre.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

“In a year that has seen plenty of hip-hop books, *The Big Payback* stands out as a must-read for any fan—or detractor—of the genre.”—*Forbes*

“One of the juiciest, flat-out most enjoyable books I've read in a long time.”—*The Atlantic*

“Epic.”—*The Village Voice*

“[A] stylish, lavishly detailed love letter to the genre and industry...Charnas makes an elegant case for how hip-hop is the consummate art form.”—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“The riveting dialogue culled from more than 300 interviews makes it seem as if Charnas was in the room for every deal that ever went down in hip-hop, and sometimes he was.”—*Austin Chronicle*

“Dan Charnas captures an epic story full of joy and pain, triumph and failure, grace and greed with the skills

of a journalist, the wisdom of an insider, and the passion of a microphone fiend. Call *The Big Payback* a hip-hop version of David Halberstam's *The Reckoning*.”—Jeff Chang, author, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*

“With an insider's connections and an outsider's perspective, Dan Charnas has written the otherwise untold story of the business of hip-hop. His cast of characters—producers, agents, label executives, talent scouts—is every bit as compelling and dramatic as the musicians themselves.”—Samuel G. Freedman, *New York Times* columnist and author of *Upon This Rock*, *Who She Was*, and *Jew vs. Jew*

“*The Big Payback* is a stunning achievement. Not only does it manage to pack in countless unprecedented anecdotes about hip-hop that you can't find anywhere else, the read is effortlessly smooth.”—Cheo H. Coker, co-screenwriter of *Notorious* and author of *Unbelievable: The Life, Death, and Afterlife of the Notorious B.I.G.*

“Dan Charnas brings a fan's devotion, an industry insider's savvy, and a reporter's unblinking eye to chronicling a cultural revolution that is as contradictory and complex as the country that produced it. *Payback* is a bitch.”—Fred Goodman, author of *Fortune's Fool* and *The Mansion on the Hill*

About the Author

DAN CHARNAS scouted talent and promoted records for the seminal rap label, Profile, and was Vice President of A&R for Rick Rubin's Def American Recordings. His writing has appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Village Voice*. Charnas holds a master's degree from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize Fellowship. This is his first book.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Melissa Chandler:

What do you concerning book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material if you want something to explain what you problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They have to answer that question simply because just their can do that will. It said that about guide. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is right. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this specific *The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop* to read.

Christopher Burnham:

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Cynthia Caron:

The reason? Because this *The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will jolt you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who write the book in such wonderful way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book include such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were being you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Richard Plummer:

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