



Have Gun, Will Travel: The Spectacular Rise and Violent Fall of Death Row Records

Ronin Ro

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Death Row Records is one of the most successful music labels of all time. From its inception in 1992, it exploded on the rap music scene with sales climbing to the \$125 million mark in just four years. Even more noticeable than the label's financial success is the effect it had on American youth culture, making gangsta rap more popular with suburban white youth and MTV viewers than traditional rock groups. But under the guidance of six-foot-four-inch, 300-pound CEO Marion "Suge" Knight, Death Row also became the most controversial record label in history - a place where violence, gang feuds, threats, intimidation, and brushes with death were business as usual. "Have Gun Will Travel" details the spectacular rise and violent fall of a music label that had at its heart a ferocious criminal enterprise cloaked behind corporate facades that gave it a guise of legitimacy. With inside access no other writer can claim, Ronin Ro, the country's preeminent rap journalist, exposes the facts everyone else is afraid to divulge - from the initial bankrolling of Death Row by a leader of L.A.'s notorious Bloods gang, to links with New York's Genovese crime family. "Have Gun Will Travel" lays bare the full story behind this influential label, including the still-unsolved murders of Tupac Shakur and the Notorious B.I.G., as well as Suge Knight's rise to power, his fights with East Coast rap titans such as Sean "Puffy" Combs, and his eventual imprisonment.

Have Gun, Will Travel: The Spectacular Rise and Violent Fall of Death Row Records Details

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From Reader Review Have Gun, Will Travel: The Spectacular Rise and Violent Fall of Death Row Records for online ebook

Stephanie LGW says

This book may give you nightmares, whether you believe every word or not. Death Row Records was one of the premier record labels in the 90's. The way it was run, however, made it seem like the newest, most lethal gang in California. The book follows Suge Knight, Tupac, Snoop Doggy Dog, and Dr. Dre in depth through the meteoric rise and disastrous fall of Death Row; through Suge's imprisonment, Tupac and Biggie's untimely deaths that may or may not have been caused by Suge, and Snoop and Dre leaving the label. Among the beatings and murders associated with the Row, many are still not solved. The label seems to have left more of a legacy of violence than a legacy of genre- and life-changing music.

Robert says

This was a great book to go back to read and relive my youth of pretending to be a gangster growing up in suburban New Jersey. It still amazes me how much talent was on that label, and how they flushed it down the toilet. The problem with this book is that I still feel it is a lot of one person saying one thing, and another person saying another. It is mostly anti-Suge but still parts of this I can't fully buy into because there isn't concrete proof. Plus it isn't like some of these other individuals had clean records either, so why should I believe everything they say. It is too bad that it cost rap music the life of one (and possibly two) of its greatest artists ever. Man my impression of DJ Quik didn't improve after reading this either. I will also now pay even more attention to what these artists are wearing on album covers and in their videos, too.

Mark R. says

Fast-paced, detailed account of the beginning and end of Death Row Records--and gangsta rap, in general. Every chapter is full of quotes and interviews with various rappers, industry figures, and gang members. One of the best nonfiction books I've read.

Andrew Mitchell says

A fascinating look into 'probably' one of the most fraudulent record labels in the history of music!

There are two things that you CANNOT take away from Death Row. Firstly, they released some of the best hip-hop albums ever and they killed Tupac!

A great read!

Jedidiah says

This book is a prime example of why you need a good editor. It's pretty clear this was rushed into print in the late 90s, but it's still surprising that a company like Doubleday would publish it in the shape it's in. The stories are good though.

Amanda says

Interesting take on Death Row Records, but I sensed a bit of Tupac prejudice or maybe that was just an author being truthful as opposed to adulatory.

Scott says

It has been a long time since I read this, but recommend it for anyone studying the history of pop culture. A must read if you work in the music industry.

Mary Beth Kennedy says

I received this book as a birthday gift. If you've ever wondered what went on inside the infamous Death Row Records, this book is for you. Ronin Ro goes into detail about the origins of notorious California (WEST SIDE!) gangsta rap and Blood/Crip affiliations, as well as chronicled incidents with our faves Dr. Dre, Tupac, and Snoop.

Oh oh, wait a minute, hold up. Did I mention this book gives us the dealio about Suge Knight? If you've ever been curious as to how one man struck fear inside CEOs and basically ran a major record label using members of the Crips, intimidation tactics, and corruption, this book is for you.

The Rise and Fall of Death Row Records.

Justin says

Entertaining story of the rise and fall of Death Row Records - a good read for those who were caught up in the heyday of gangsta rap or those who are interested in getting behind the scenes of the music industry.

Rolesam says

This book was published only one year after Death Row Records fell apart. I think the author should've waited at least a couple of years before writing this book because there has been a shit load of interviews with former artists of the label since then where they talk about the old days. But it doesn't change the fact that this book is really interesting. The chapter about Danny Boy and Suge being secret lovers was pretty funny and random as hell.

firmfiasco says

The best part about the book is all the details. Great book for any hiphop fan.

Patrick Whitman says

On loan to Mel at work

Jeff Freeman says

Outrageously entertaining account of Suge Knight's Death Row Records. Highly recommended for hip-hop heads.

Dylan says

The writing, stylistically, is pretty horrible. The stories within are absolutely fascinating, especially if you're a hip-hop fan, so you kind of forgive the bad writing. . . no one could have messed this book up.

Mickey says

An unseen, and highly unknown aspect to early 90's Hip Hop music from a label / management perspective, and how trouble surrounded the label Death Row Records.

For any fan of Hip Hop or as a fan of Death Row Records, this will be an interesting read, however Ronin Ro's bias is clear. According to him; 2Pac's recordings are classed as "childish", despite having one of the most renowned and respected music catalogues in not just Music in general, but also the wider black culture, to a point Universities' study his work. There's nothing wrong with not liking his work and letting this be known (not everyone likes Hip Hop, some don't like certain sub-genre's of Hip Hop, and some wouldn't even need to, to get some kind of enjoyment from the book), but not when on the same breath, artists like Notorious B.I.G. & Snoop Dogg are gaining praise for their work, which arguably talks more on sensitive topics in a glorified manner. Just little things like these are evident throughout the book.

After reading this book, and also knowing the history of music, black culture and of the label itself, it's clear that this book only provides a small serving on what could generate an entire volume of books to get a fuller insight. Too much for any one author.
