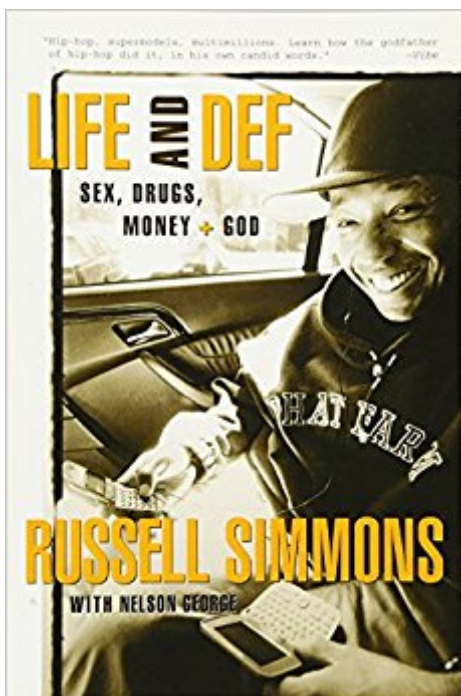


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# Life And Def: Sex, Drugs, Money, + God



## Synopsis

Russell Simmons, the original and eternal hip-hop mogul, is one of the most innovative and influential figures in modern American business and culture. When no one outside of inner-city New York had even heard of hip-hop, Simmons saw the seeds of a global force that would change the way people talk, dress, listen to music, and choose the heroes they hang on their walls. Today, he oversees a sprawling, multimillion-dollar empire of culture-defining businesses in everything from music to fashion, advertising to film, and media to visual art. At the same time he's broadened his interests and influence and pushed hip-hop to new plateaus of power and relevance. *Life and Def* is a one-of-a-kind tale that interweaves the remarkable journey of Russell Simmons with the story of the culture he's transformed and been transformed by. In his own brash, compelling voice, Simmons chronicles his numerous business successes and occasional failures. He tells the story of the founding of the legendary Def Jam Records, whose roster stretches from original rap icons like L.L. Cool J, Public Enemy, and the Beastie Boys to today's top stars, including Jay-Z and DMX. He traces the launching of Def Comedy Jam, the long-running hit television series that introduced a new generation of black comedic stars to America, from Martin Lawrence and Bill Bellamy to Bernie Mac and Chris Rock. He spins hilarious tales of his adventures in Hollywood, where he's produced hit movies like Eddie Murphy's *The Nutty Professor* and worked with quirky geniuses like Abel Ferrara. He also tells the story of Phat Farm, the wildly successful pioneering urban clothing label whose origins lay in Russell's longtime fascination with fashion (and fashion models). Simmons's story is also one of personal transformation, from the driven man who in the heady days of early success indulged himself with drugs, sex, and world-class decadence to the husband and father he is today, a man who has found meaning in activism, philanthropy, and spiritual practice while never losing his passion for the social, political, artistic, and commercial potential of hip-hop. Through it all he relates telling anecdotes about the characters he's dealt with: models and gangsters, street poets and gurus, and major players like Donald Trump, Sean Combs, Jon Peters, and Tupac Shakur. Full of advice, opinions, and behind-the-scenes scoop, *Life and Def* is the story of the quintessential hip-hop life. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Legendary entrepreneur Simmons's career bio reads like a history of the hip-hop movement, from his first stint as a DJ and promoter in the mid-1970s, through his cofounding of Def Jam Records and groundbreaking 1980s work with Run-DMC, the Beastie Boys and Public Enemy, to his wildly successful cable showcase Def Comedy Jam and his fashion label Phat Farm. But surprisingly, the tone of his memoir, written with accomplished author George (The Death of Rhythm and Blues), is rather flat. Simmons shares tales of his youth in Queens, early New York street-hustling days with DJs like Kurtis Blow, and partying in the Caribbean with Naomi Campbell and Robert De Niro, describing his life as full "of decisions and danger with deep moral and emotional consequences." Long on details and short on self-analysis, the stories blur into one long rise to the top. The book has an "as-told-to" quality, as if George transcribed interviews and added accurate sociological analysis in stilted prose ("It is that contrast between street knowledge and traditional values that frightens mainstream people about hip-hop"). Judging from Simmons's taciturnity about past drug use and sexism, he may have wanted simply to recount his success as a black businessman "all of my business success ties in directly to my internal growth." Still, Simmons's book is required reading for hip-hop fans. 16 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW. (Oct. 9)Forecast: The major media blitz includes tie-in with Phat Farm's 10th anniversary promotions and the \$1-million launch of Simmons's new telecommunications company, Rush Communications, as well as promotional support from the BET cable company and Simmons's 360HipHop.com site. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Adult/High School-With the help of prolific author George, Simmons discusses his experiences as a manager and producer of hip-hop music, comedy, and fashions. His real name is Hollis Crew, the big brother of former old-school rapper Run of Run-D.M.C. Their father wrote rap lyrics for

Run-D.M.C. early in their career. Although this memoir is unlikely to hold teens' interest from cover to cover, it can be a useful source for researching the history and influence of hip-hop culture. It provides information about other rap stars as well. Readers can also gain valuable insights into the business aspects of the entertainment industry from Simmons's explanations of how he developed film projects, Def Comedy Jam, Phat Farm fashions, and the Internet company 360 Hip-Hop. The author gives examples of how major record companies such as Sony exploit small independent companies such as Def Jam. He also details how specific individuals-including rap artists-have betrayed him in business deals. At the end of the memoir, Simmons summarizes his formula for success in five succinct lessons. A telling look at the unglamorous side of the industry. Joyce Fay Fletcher, Rippon Middle School, Prince William County, VA Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Very good story..Not your straight ghetto drug dealer story, but just enough of the violence.and drug game to keep you interested The author captures the point of view clearly from he perspective of a 16 yr growing into a troubled young adult. I really liked the ending, it provided another perspective of the game, reality and life and it's lessons...great book

The Life and Def is dope!! It really gives you a close up view of the journey Russell Simmons took to be the mogul he is today. For those interested in using Hip Hop to reach and teach youth and young adults I also suggest checking out "Live Above The Hype: A Hip Hop Life Skills Curriculum." It includes 20 insightful lessons that initiate in depth self reflection in at risk youth and young adults, with a powerful foreword written by Dr. Michael Eric Dyson! Peace Life and Def. Well done!

Excellent book, gives some insight to way some of my favorite groups from growing up got their start.

amazingly written by an amazing man :)

It's worth the read

This book was fun to read, Russell details some of his adventures very well and intorduces us to the world of hip-hop from his point of view. I recommend it if you're at a beach somewhere having a corona or at starbucks and want to just read. If youre looking for business insights, not that many.

fast shipping and the book arrived in excellent condition! i would definitely order from this seller again. thank you so much!

he title speaks for itself. In the late sixties and seventies, he speaks about drugs and money--how he sold artificial drugs as a youth and later when gangs formulated in Queens, Harlem, and surrounding cities. He later realized that he came from a decent neighborhood and good-home training, why was he in the street selling fake drugs (cocoa leaf as if it was cocaine) and hanging out with gangs (for those who came from broken homes)--so he got out before death came knocking at his door.He went to college and before finishing his degree in sociology like his mother, only 4-5 credits short from a degree, he started his record company. Now, we see how he built his empire and all came into fruition for Def Jam, later Phat Farm, and other business ventures.While reading this book, it brought back memories when I loved hip-hop and rap. There was debates on who were the first rappers in the game such as Kurtis Blow (first male solo artist) 1977, Afrikka Bambaataa, and/or Sugar Hill Gang. It also made me remember when my father bought off the ramp of Chicago freeway an album of "Rapper's Delight" by Sugar Hill when I was only 7 years old. I was into the cover and later we loved the song! Then, you have the hard hitters like L.L. Cool J, Run D.M.C. and controversial rap groups like Beastie Boys and PE (public enemy). Now I am questioning why I loved rap then and dislike it now! He also talks briefly about Jay-Z and DMC, marriage, and pictures to refer to those times in the rap game (family photos, etc).Oddly, when he mentions some of these titles from various artists, I remember the chorus line after all these years. I also thought about from 83-90, when I lived in the Midwest (Chicago), New York, and West Coast (California) where the music varied from east coast to west coast music and artists including tunes of dance/house music! I recall how some rap artists were played all over, regardless of east-west coast rivalries...and thinking back, sometimes east coast (NY) would only play their rappers and vice versa in the west coast...but Midwest played them both. We heard Too-Short, NWA, Easy-E, as well as Run DMC, Public Enemy, and LL Cool J while we rocked to stepping sounds and house music. Loved it when I lived in Chicago area!

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