



News from

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Do you ever wish you'd never been born?

RANT

An Oral Biography of Buster Casey

A Novel by **Chuck Palahniuk**

“Viciously incisive and lethally funny social commentary in a novel cast as an oral biography. Palahniuk’s latest provides a parody of the oral biography format (Edie, Capote, etc.), offers homage to both James Dean and J. G. Ballard’s *Crash* and serves to show just how much teenage angst has degenerated since the innocence of Holden Caulfield – all this before a time-warped finale that turns genealogy into some sort of Mobius strip. Though his voice appears minimally in the narrative, the hero (or is he?) of the novel is Buster (or Buddy) “Rant” Casey, who lives a short life of escalating destruction just to be able to do something, feel something and escape from the rural town that is living death to those who don’t manage to leave it. A boy of peculiarity (even mystically) sensed intuition, he initially amuses himself by seeking bites from various animals and insects, launching a rabies epidemic as he passes his infections along through sexual encounters. With his move to the bigger city, he attracts a posse of “Party Crashers,” joy riders who spend their evenings in wedding attire crashing into each others’ vehicles. One crash kills Rant, who is dead (or is he?) as the novel begins and is eulogized by a Greek chorus of friends, neighbors, relatives and enemies, along with an eyewitness reporter for DRVR Radio Graphic Traffic and an historian whose involvement in the proceedings sustains a mystery through much of the novel. Many of the themes in the author’s exploration of the dark underbelly of modern life and culture will be familiar to his ardent fans, but the formal inventiveness of the fictional oral biography provides a fresh twist. ...Readers who

like to walk on the... wild side will rave.”

-- KIRKUS REVIEWS, Starred Review



Chuck Palahniuk is available for interviews in the following cities:

PORTLAND – Wednesday, 5/2
SEATTLE – Thursday, 5/3
SAN FRANCISCO – Fri., 5/4
BERKELEY – Saturday, 5/5
LOS ANGELES – Monday, 5/7
NEW YORK – Wednesday, 5/9
PHILADELPHIA – Thurs., 5/10
BOSTON – Friday, 5/11
MIAMI – Saturday, 5/12
LEXINGTON, KY – Mon., 5/14
MILWAUKEE – Tuesday, 5/15
CHICAGO – Wednesday, 5/16
COLUMBUS – Thursday, 5/17

Contact: Todd Doughty, 212-782-9796 or tdoughty@randomhouse.com

“In his eighth novel, Palahniuk uses a new form – oral history – to revisit the themes that have always informed his oeuvre. Buster “Rant” Casey, a naturopathic serial killer, is dead, and those who survive him – family, friends, enemies, and hangers-on – are trying to make sense of the void left by his passing. Perhaps offering a meditation on celebrity, the author explores the topics that have always intrigued him: uniqueness and belonging, cross-generational panic, the search for authenticity, and the consume-or-die worldview. If this suggests that Palahniuk’s biggest influence here is himself, this *Tom Sawyer* on methamphetamine belies the influence of William S. Burroughs (in its satire of boys’-own adventures), William Gibson (character’s ‘boost’ each others’ neural transcripts of lived experience), and J. G. Ballard (Casey’s clique crashes cars in order to feel more alive). Outrageous [and] full of energetic humor, **RANT** is a memorable portrait of the cults that gather around authentically different people and a portrait of dystopia that feels unsettlingly contemporary.”

-- **Booklist**

“Buster Casey, destined to live fast, die young and murder as many people as he can, is the rotten seed at the core of Palahniuk’s comically nasty eighth novel (after *Haunted*; *Lullaby*; *Diary*; etc.). Set in a future where urbanites are segregated by strict curfews into Daytimers and Nighttimers, the narrative unfolds as an oral history comprising contradictory accounts from people who knew Buster. These include childhood friends horrified by the boy’s macabre behavior (getting snakes, scorpions and spiders to bite him and induce instant erections; repeatedly infecting himself with rabies), policemen and doctors who had dealings with the rabies “super-spreader”; and Party Crashers, thrill-seeking Nighttimers who turn city streets into demolition derby arenas. After liberally infecting his hometown peers with rabies, Buster hits the big city and takes up with the Party Crashers. A series of deaths lead to a police investigation of Buster (long-since known as “rant” – the sound children make while vomiting) that peaks just as Buster apparently commits suicide in a blaze of car-crash glory. This dark religious parable (there’s even a resurrection) from the master of grotesque excess may not attract new readers, but it will delight old ones.”

-- **PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

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An Oral Biography of Buster Casey

A Novel by **Chuck Palahniuk**

With over three million copies of his books sold in the United States alone, Chuck Palahniuk is the most interesting “underground” literary author there is. This former auto mechanic-turned-writer has a penchant for unpredictable plot lines and inimitable characters coupled with a prescient eye that predicts the next pop culture phenomenon. Palahniuk’s first novel, *Fight Club*, has become a young male reading “rite of passage” as well as course-adopted material in college classes on gender/masculine identity. His subversive, wickedly funny writing has been known to induce fainting and his events have the feel of a rock concert attended by hundreds of devoted groupies.

With his new novel **RANT: AN ORAL BIOGRAPHY OF BUSTER CASEY** (Doubleday; May 1, 2007; \$24.95) Palahniuk does what only he can do best: combine literary appeal with bizarre characters, a rollercoaster story, and a ‘you’ll never guess it’ ending. This time we are brought into his surreal, but always insightful, world with a rabies-spreading, spider-loving, car crashing protagonist who just may be the worst serial killer of all time. Or is he?

RANT takes the form of a (fictional) oral history of one Buster “Rant” Casey, in which an assortment of friends, enemies, admirers, detractors, and relations have their say on his short life and sudden death. In true Palahniuk fashion, there is much more to Rant than meets the eye, and as we learn more about him contradictions abound and the truth seems to slip farther away.

Born into a tiny, boring town, Rant searches for anything to break the tedium of small-town life, and finds it in the form of rabid bugs and animals. Plunging his arm down foxholes and hoarding black widow spiders, he seeks out diseased animals for that rabies rush. He gets bitten by black widow spiders for their priapic effects and then infects most of the girls from his high school. And he may have even murdered his grandmother—an infected spider was found in her church hat—but that’s just town speculation.

Rant escapes from his hometown for Middleton, the big city, where the populace is divided into Daytimers and Nighttimers, a government enforced segregation. This separation engenders two divergent, adverse cultures: the seemingly normal, moral Daytimers who conduct their lives and business during the light of day and the pale, degenerate, and often rabid Nighttimers who are only permitted to go into public after the sun has set.

As a nighttime, Rant becomes a leader of an urban demolition derby called Party Crashing. On designated nights participants recognize fellow Crashers by indicators such as “Just Married” signs on bumpers, or Christmas trees or coffee mugs on the roof of cars. During specific windows of time, in limited areas of the city, they stalk and crash into each other.

It’s in this violent, late-night hunting game that Rant meets three friends who try to reconstruct his sadistic, peculiar life after his spectacular death. As they dig deeper into his past, questions arise about his family, identity, and that odd historian. Although we never hear from Rant directly, he is the crux of every story, many that occur simultaneously, and most of the current physical and social problems that plague society. How could one man achieve, or destroy, so much? Well, maybe there isn’t just one...

Not since *Fight Club* has Palahniuk created such a warped world, added a major twist, and shocked with a surprise ending. Filled with murder, bee swarms, government-enforced temporal segregation, car crashing teenagers, time travel, and biblical overtones **RANT** promises to satisfy and thrill Palahniuk fans and entice new readers as well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Chuck Palahniuk is the bestselling author of seven novels: *Haunted*, *Lullaby*, *Fight Club*—which was made into a film by director David Fincher—*Diary*, *Survivor*, *Invisible*, *Monsters*, and *Choke*. He is also the author of the nonfiction profile of Portland *Fugitives and Refugees*, published as part of the Crown Journey's series, and the nonfiction collection *Stranger Than Fiction*. He lives in the Pacific Northwest.

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