



# Gunshots in My Cook-Up: Bits and Bites from a Hip-Hop Caribbean Life

*Selwyn Seyfu Hinds*

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## **Gunshots in My Cook-Up: Bits and Bites from a Hip-Hop Caribbean Life** Selwyn Seyfu Hinds

Selwyn Seyfu Hinds, noted music journalist and former editor-in-chief of "The Source," brings us "Gunshots in My Cook-Up." It's an extraordinary memoir that focuses on hip-hop culture -- its American existence, its international appeal, and more intimately, its affect on the author's life. Hinds chronicles this long and bumpy relationship that began the moment his nine-year-old eyes and ears drank in "Rapper's Delight" in Guyana, and continued with his eventual migration to Brooklyn as a teenager, on through his adult role as a player and pundit in our present culture of hip-hop primacy. The lively narrative presents a host of moving portraits of life in the hip-hop trenches. It opens an un-precedented window on the pain and beauty in being five-time Grammy award-winner Lauryn Hill; the pensive, controlling tendencies of Sean "P. Diddy" Combs; the vulnerabilities underlying Dr. Dre's gangster-for-life exterior; the runaway creative energy of the gifted songwriter Wyclef Jean; the perpetual drive of Russell Simmons; and much more. Through the intimate interviews and recollections of the celebrities that pepper the narrative, alongside deeply affecting, personal musings, Hinds traces the heights and depths of his hip-hop love affair. He takes the reader on a vivid exploration: a murky nightclub in the violent streets of late-eighties Brooklyn; the campus of an Ivy League university caught up in the throes of political rap during the early nineties; a curbside in Los Angeles where the Notorious B.I.G. has just been shot; the aching poor streets of Port-au-Prince Haiti, as a sea of black humanity surges to touch a hip-hop native son; and within the churnings of his own mind as he struggles to make sense of a love that drifts all too often to ambivalence, even hate. "Gunshots in My Cook-Up" is refreshingly original, a clear-eyed take on an American-born phenomenon gone global that continues to conjure curses and blessings. Like the disparate ingredients in the Guyanese rice dish "cook-up" from which the title stems, the broad terrain staked out by the book's individual essays pulls together into a seamless whole. The writing is so beautiful and engaging you simply cannot put this book down, whether or not you're an adherent of hip-hop or of today's youth culture.

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