

So You Wanna Be a Rap Superstar

Written by Davey D ID3395

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So You Wanna Be a Rap Superstar? Then You Betta Talk to this Woman

by Davey D

In honor of Women's History Month we recently sat down and interviewed one of the industry's most powerful people-Wendy Day of the Rap Coalition. It was through Wendy Day that acts like Master P and Cash Money got their respective deals. It was through Wendy that hip hop and rap artists like Slick Rick were able to get their lopsided contracts broken. A long time artist advocate, she's the person that major labels love to hate because she's committed to thoroughly lacing people with the ins and outs of the industry game.

Her website rapcoalition.org is required reading for anyone entering into the business as it contains a wealth of information ranging from the money breakdown when you sign a recording contract, to the politics of getting airplay. There's information on how to copyright your material, how to start a record label as well as what to look for in a manager. Thousands of people flock to her site or read her columns in publications like Murder Dog where they soak up the information and go out into the world better prepared.

Originally Wendy was based in New York where she attempted to lay down foundation to start an artist union and unite the various factions within New York. She later focused her attention in the south and has been in Memphis and now Atlanta for over 5 years building coalitions and helping the Third Coast maintain their dominance in the rap game.

Back in the days Wendy was and can still tell you how to go about getting signed. Far too often she wound up having to help folks get unsigned because of the unfair contracts the industry puts before hungry artists. Nowadays she's all about helping folks not get signed, but how to make more money on the independent tip. There are far too many success stories that have come from her camp to name off..

In this two part interview Wendy Day breaks bread on a variety of topics and shows us how to avoid industry pitfalls. We start off talking about the typical recording contract that many up and coming artists find themselves locked into. The most problematic are production deals where

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the producer is the middle man between the artist and label. In theory the money and resources are supposed to trickle down. In way too many cases they simply don't and that's when Wendy gets that frantic phone call from an artist trying to escape a bad situation.

Wendy explained the dynamics of how a street savvy hustler type cat from the hood can get got and ripped off in the music biz. She explained that far too often people enter into the music business not fully understanding or appreciating that many of the big time execs they come across come from gangsta backgrounds themselves. She noted the only difference is that these industry gangstas went and got law and business degrees so they appear legit, but they are definitely about their hustle at the end of the day. Many succeed in making artists believe that they are being granted a big favor when they get signed, when in reality they are often times being pimped big time.

On a side note, folks may wanna take a look at the book Ruthless written by former NWA manager Jerry Heller. While the information and juicy stories about Ice Cube and Eazy E may be the thing that immediately captures your attention, the real jewels are when Heller talks about his background and all the power house people he came up with and what they have always been about. That book should be required reading as well.

In our interview Wendy lays out the true meaning and ramifications of RECOUPARATING and how that process keeps artists forever in debt. People need to truly understand what that word means and how it gets applied to ALL artists who sign to these major labels. It amounts to modern day share cropping.

We discussed whether or not industry conditions have improved now that we have high profile artist CEOs like P-Diddy, Jay-Z and others who are signing acts and running labels. Sadly Wendy noted that they have not. The average recording contract even by some of the new artist music moguls have not changed. She talked about the role capitalism plays in this industry and how it gets a lot of people caught up.

We also talked about the need for an artist union and why one doesn't presently exist. She said lack of unity and ego have prevented this from occurring. In addition some artists are just so desperate to get on that they will literally sell their souls and not heed much of the advice given to them that will in the long run help them benefit.

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We concluded our interview by comparing the way the rock industry works vs. the rap industry and the challenge we face in getting local airplay when the major labels are pushing a national agenda.

This is an interview you have to listen to if you're trying to get into the game.

Part 1

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part 2

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