

THE ORIGINATORS

AUTHOR PROVOCATEUR *Chuck Palahniuk*



TIME-BENDER AND MIND-BENDER. No longer an underground cult phenom, the novelist Chuck Palahniuk is credited with introducing new audiences to literature, thanks to his talent for spinning visceral tales shrouded in black humor. A prodigious writer, Palahniuk recently published the novel "Rant," his tenth book in as many years. At last count, three million volumes bearing his name have been sold in the United States alone.

"Rant" chronicles the life and death of Buster "Rant" Casey, a character whom Palahniuk describes as "a reinvention of an American archetype like Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, or Tom Joad." Casey's story as the "Kissing Killer" moves from a small town to the big city in a series of overlapping and sometimes contradictory reminiscences, told as oral history. The format "allows me to cut and intercut a lot of different stories the way you would edit film," explains Palahniuk. "Audiences are so sophisticated now. They're not looking for a

nineteenth-century form of novel. They're looking for something that can move at a good clip."

Like his character, Palahniuk considers himself a "nighttimer," someone who "takes responsibility for generating his own culture." Palahniuk shrugs off charges that his works are nihilistic. Instead, he sees himself as a romantic—that is to say, one who "abandons the safety of isolation and chooses to bond with the community or another individual and gives up some of his personal power to be with that other person."

One group Palahniuk doesn't cede personal power to is critics: "They get you really high or really down and neither is the reason I write." Although he hasn't slowed down for a decade, Palahniuk, whose next book comes out in 2008, nonetheless finds time to enjoy a good Scotch on a Friday night. The Glenlivet, the single malt that started it all, salutes Chuck Palahniuk, a fellow Originator.

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