



# The Skills to Pay the Bills: The Story of the Beastie Boys

*Alan Light*

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In 1987, three white Jewish boys from New York City were the most fascinating phenomenon in the burgeoning rap music scene. No, really. The Beastie Boys, barely out of their teens, had just released *Licensed to Ill*, which quickly became the first hip-hop album to reach number one on the charts. Pairing vulgar and hilarious lyrics with heavy-metal-derived musical backing and a punk DIY attitude, the Beasties—MCA (Adam Yauch), King Ad-Rock (Adam Horovitz), and Mike D (Michael Diamond)—changed the face of rap forever by bringing it into the mainstream. In the years that followed, they would change it again and again—musically, culturally, and politically.

To create *The Skills to Pay the Bills*, Alan Light spent years taping conversations with the group, their friends, roommates, producers, engineers, collaborators, and other artists from Madonna to Chuck D. Here, as told from the inside, is the fascinating tale of three rump-shaking, innovative rappers whose albums still go platinum and whose tours continue to fill arenas after more than two decades of making music. *The Skills to Pay the Bills* chronicles the Beasties' unique journey from the hardcore New York underground to the top of the Billboard charts. It is a story of larger-than-life personalities, noble causes, funky beats, and truly one of the most influential and ambitious groups of all time.


I said, Where'd you get your information from, huh?

“The first time I met them, I thought I was on Candid Camera.” —D.M.C.

“I think I made out with Adam Yauch once in their dressing room.” —Madonna

“One of my favorite groups is the Beastie Boys.” —Bono

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