



Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James

Rick James , David Ritz (With)

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Best known for his 1980s hit songs “Super Freak,” “Give it to Me Baby,” and “Mary Jane,” the late singer and funk music pioneer Rick James collaborated with acclaimed music biographer David Ritz in this posthumously published, no-holds-barred memoir of a rock star’s life and soul.

He was the nephew of Temptations singer Melvin Franklin; a boy who watched and listened, mesmerized from underneath cocktail tables at the shows of Etta James and Miles Davis. He was a vagrant hippie who wandered to Toronto, where he ended up playing with Neil Young and Joni Mitchell, and he became a household name in the 1980s with his hit song “Super Freak.” Later in life, he was a bad boy who got caught up in drug smuggling and ended up in prison. But since his passing in August 2004, Rick James has remained a legendary icon whose name is nearly synonymous with funk music—and who popularized the genre, creating a lasting influence on pop artists from Prince to Jay-Z to Snoop Dogg, among countless others.

In *Glow*, Rick James and acclaimed music biographer David Ritz collaborated to write a no-holds-barred memoir about the boy and the man who became a music superstar in America’s disco age. It tells of James’s upbringing and how his mother introduced him to musical geniuses of the time. And it reveals details on many universally revered artists, from Marvin Gaye and Prince to Nash, Teena Marie, and Berry Gordy. James himself said, “My journey has taken me through hell and back. It’s all in my music—the parties, the pain, the oversized ego, the insane obsessions.” But despite his bad boy behavior, James was a tremendous talent and a unique, unforgettable human being. His “glow” was an overriding quality that one of his mentors saw in him—and one that will stay with this legendary figure who left an indelible mark on American popular music.

Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James Details

Date : Published July 8th 2014 by Atria Books

ISBN : 9781476764146

Author : Rick James , David Ritz (With)

Format : Hardcover 342 pages

Genre : Music, Nonfiction, Biography, Autobiography, Memoir

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From Reader Review Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James for online ebook

Naika Joseph says

Real raw biography

Quanita says

I received this advanced copy through Goodreads.

This autobiography gave me a chance to meet the man behind the music. James articulated his faults with no sugar coating. He was remarkable in his ability to see his own strengths and weaknesses and still be in awe of others in the business - even those that abandoned him on the way up AND the way down. Like many great entertainers, his addictions were as strong as his talent was large. His death at age 56 years old was a testament to a life lived hard.

This book was like having an intimate conversation with a friend.

If you have an interest in the music business or the life of one of its' greats this book is for you.

Marisa Gonzalez says

When Rick James met the writer of this book he wanted him to write his story because he enjoyed the way the author wrote the biography for Marvin Gaye but he stated "Marvin's story ends in tragedy but mine will end in triumph." Unfortunately, Rick's story ended just as tragically when he died of a heart attack due to heavy drug use back in 2004. He was never able to see the finished book after many years of interviews. The author did a great job. It is definitely in Rick's voice and all his cockiness comes through in the dialog. There was never a dull moment in this one. Lots of interesting stories though it is not for those who are easily offended as he tells of his many sexual escapades. Also, the rivalry between him and Prince was hilarious. I did like the fact that it was mentioned that the rivalry was on both sides. It was Rick's realization that Prince was the new kid taking the music scene away from him and Prince sounds like he egged it on by ignoring Rick's talent and seniority which he should have respected. I highly recommend this one.

Zenzile says

Sooo....my favorite parts of this autobiography was when Rick would talk shit about Jim Morrison, The Doors, Prince and just people whose music I generally like. It's fascinating because I can't know if he really thought they were weak or if he was just intimidated and insecure. Either way, I love it when he punks Prince over and over. Hilarious.

On the downside though (and there is a lot of downside) I'm pretty sure that there is a ton of horrible stuff James did or had done to him that know one will ever know and that he probably didn't even remember

because he was so drugged up so often, it was scary.

He was clearly brilliant, a genius, an innovator but he could have been so much more if he had ever managed to get out of his own way. Ultimately, a cautionary tale, I read this book quicker than I have read any book I can recall in years because it's a wild, slightly addictive ride.

Pun intended.

Long live the Funk.

George Crowder says

David Ritz's writing in assist of Rick James is as professional as ever. However, Rick James's long-running addictions to drugs and sex makes for tedious and somewhat gruelling reading, alleviated by flashes of insight and brief appearances by many famous people. Had the interactions with the other celebrities been fleshed-out in more detail, I'd bump up the rating.

Erica L says

Interesting

Cyrus Da says

One of the more entertaining books I'd read in some time; got me through a dreary winter's week in Nanjing 2014.

Rick is the man. Some particulars escape me, but Rick crossed paths and/or collaborated with Neil Young, Janis Joplin, Marvin Gaye, Charles Manson (in fact, Rick barely escaped the Manson murders), Berry Gordy, and many, many more through the course of his life. From the come up in Buffalo to salad days of draft dodging in Toronto, only to find himself thrown in a New York prison -- Rick's life was littered with fits and starts, periods where he thought he was on track to a real musical career before disaster, misfortune, and especially self-destructive behavior conspired to veer him of course once more.

By the time Rick writes about the release of "Come Get It!", his 1978 debut album, you start to realize that stardom was simply the culmination of Rick's journey. All of his life experiences up until the 1978 debut made him the man he was and provided a life tapestry that informed the rest of his work.

On that note, I enjoyed reading this book more for the peaks-and-valleys struggle of Rick's life than for the stories behind his music. The Motown years were fun to read about, though -- doing coke with Marvin Gaye and butting heads with Berry Gordy seemed like a helluva way to spend the '60s and '70s.

This review puts it better than I have: <http://grantland.com/hollywood-prospe...>

Alretha Thomas says

Couldn't put it down. Finished it too fast. I had no idea how serious Rick James was about music and the contributions he has made.

Read In Colour says

Rick James really thought highly of himself, like REALLY.

Michael says

"Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James" is a ride like no other. I will just start off by letting potential readers know that if you're put off by cursing, frank discussions of sex and, this should be no surprise, a lot of descriptive unashamed drug use this book will not be for you. It is safe to say that James holds nothing back in this book since he mentions on a number of occasions that the songs he wrote were primarily autobiographical.

I don't know if James kept some type of journal but how he remembered all these stories from his past with the amount of drugs he claims to have ingested during his career is amazing. Co-Author, David Ritz, does mention in his introduction that James started writing this book during his two year stay in prison. There is another inmate that James calls Brother Guru who has conversations throughout the book with James. He helps James think through some of the decisions and thoughts that James made during his life. At first I took it as it was truly another inmate but the more I read about it I was wondering if Brother Guru wasn't just another side of James trying to make heads and tails of the decisions he made during his life.

I appreciated that James was honest about his feelings about other artists such as Prince, The Doors and many more. He does not always speak flattering about the artists or their talent but too many musicians' autobiographies turn into "lovefests" when they discuss other artists. He gives respect to the artists who helped him get a foot hold in the business.

My only complaint, besides numerous editing errors in the Kindle edition, would be that the timeline seems to be nonexistent. James hops around at the beginning with his stories and the timeline of events seems very confusing. As much as this adds to confusion it does not take away from any of the stories.

I would recommend this book to any music fan that especially like the Punk Funk era that James ruled. This book is a really quick read because the stories are so interesting that it becomes a page turner. A great end of summer weekend read.

Winter Sophia Rose says

Wow! An Excellent Read!

Chavon says

What a great read!!! I had no clue Rick James was as influential as he was in the world of music. I thought he was more of a novelty act, but I was wrong. James was extremely talented and rubbed elbows with musical geniuses and legends such as George Clinton, Steven Tyler and Marvin Gaye. Unfortunately like most greats, James struggled with substance abuse. Oh, and I've read Marvin Gaye's autobiography and it's interesting to see how closely weaved their lives were. And I LOVED James' stories about Prince. He couldn't stand him and made no attempt to hide it! I'm glad I got around to reading this book. David Ritz is awesome as he does a great job in making sure the artist's voice is always heard.

Nancy says

Wow! I didn't know anything about Rick James other than he was born and raised in Buffalo NY. This was one of the most eye opening music bios I have ever read. The fact that he was in the Laurel Canyon scene alone blew my mind. Great read for all lovers of music.

"<https://www.goodreads.com/photo/user/...>

Byron says

Rick James wrote a version of this while he was still alive, but it was somehow incomplete. Co-author Ritz, I'm assuming, went through and added a series of imagined conversations between James and another guy in prison, seemingly for no purpose other than to inject wild conjecture and speculation. It's kinda weird and pointless, but hardly a dealbreaker. You can tell Rick James was a great raconteur. He's especially candid about the excesses of his lifestyle when his career was at its peak. At times he does kinda seem to be lacking in self-awareness—hence, presumably, the parts Ritz pulled out of his own ass—but as far as I'm concerned that's just part of the charm.

Woman_gotta_have_it says

Let me tell you when I say I loved this book! I loved it from beginning to end. Rick James tell the story from his prison stint in 90s and begins with his life in Buffalo. Working for my Motown in the late 60s. To his success in the 80s. Now it wouldn't be Rick James without the sex drugs and fast life I tremendously enjoyed this book. I would definitely recommend it.
