



## Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James

By Rick James

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### Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James By Rick James

Best known for his song “Super Freak,” hitmaker, singer, innovator, producer, award-winning pioneer in the fusion of funk groove and rock, the late Rick James collaborated with music biographer David Ritz in this posthumously published, wildly entertaining, and profound expression 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.

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## Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James By Rick James Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“A raw and authentic accounting of Rick James' life and times.” (*USA Today*)

“Intriguing as a pipe-filled motel-room breakdown.” (*Rolling Stone*)

“A fast-paced memoir recounting his sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll exploits.” (*Publishers Weekly*)

Unflinching . . . manages to temporarily separate the story of the monster from the story of Rick James, the way Marvel Comics occasionally pulls apart Bruce Banner and the Hulk. (Alex Pappademas, Grantland)

“An engrossing portrait of his life and career.” (*Vulture.com*)

“As close as we'll ever get to the real thing.” (Jeff Simon, *The Buffalo News*)

#### About the Author

Rick James was an American singer, songwriter, musician, and record producer, best known for popularizing funk music in the late 1970s and early 1980s thanks to million-selling hits.

David Ritz is the only four-time winner of the Gleason Music Book Award.

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Glow

## LOCKED UP

I'm having these crazy dreams in jail. The dreams are so vivid—so wildly creative—that I know God is in charge of my imagination. I couldn't dream up this shit without God. God has to be the author of my dreams. In one dream, I'm with Miles Davis. We're dressed like African princes. Our robes are blue and gold. Miles is singing and I'm playing trumpet. Black angels are surrounding us. We're bathed in sunlight. We're on top of the Empire State Building and everyone in the city of New York can hear us. The people are assembled on the street; they're hanging out their windows and waving flags from office buildings. Helicopters are flying over us, but our music is so powerful that we drown out all noise. Our music is some symphony that has the angels dancing in the sky.

“Didn't know you could play jazz so good,” Miles says to me.

“Didn't know you could sing so funky,” I say to him.

The music is so beautiful I start crying through Miles's horn.

Someone says, “The hospitals are clearing out. The patients are healed.”

Someone else says, “The churches are clearing. The congregations are in the streets.”

“I told you,” says Miles. “I told you we could do it.”

When I put the trumpet to my lips again, the horn turns into a megaphone. When I start to speak, I hear the voice of my mother.

“My son has the answer,” she says. “Miles gave him the answer. Listen to my son.”

I turn to Miles, who rarely smiles, and see that he is smiling.

When I wake up from this dream, I am smiling.

But I’m still in jail.



This long stay in jail is the first time I’m remembering my dreams. I’m not even sure I had dreams before they put my ass behind bars. My mind was clogged up with cocaine—not just any cocaine, but cocaine strong enough to fuel jet engines. I was a jet engine that got dislodged from the plane of my brain. I crashed to the ground and broke into a million pieces. When the pieces magically came back together, the engine could work again. But the fuel was no longer cocaine. The fuel was something I hadn’t used since I was a little boy. I’d call it natural energy and natural drive. It’s a natural restlessness to see and explore and learn. Couldn’t do any of that exploring when I was ripping and running through the world of intoxicants. Didn’t wanna explore. Just wanted to stay high.

So ain’t this a bitch? My highs are my dreams. My dreams are my escape. And my imagination is my way out of prison. If you break down the word “imagination,” I guess it means manufacturing images. Dreaming is the purest form of that process—so, for as long as I’m locked up, I’m gonna write down my dreams.

I’m also gonna write down my life.

I’ve always wanted to write my own life story. But outside of prison I could never sit down and be quiet. My energy was scattered. I was always going in a dozen different directions at once. But now I got no choice. Got nowhere to go and nothing to do. I’m forced to read. And in reading—especially about the lives of people I relate to—I get excited. I read about Charlie Parker, Nat King Cole, Bob Marley, and Malcolm X, and I understand exactly why their lives went the way they did. I see their fuckups as my fuckups; I see their talents as my talents. Sometimes talent is so big it takes you to places that you don’t understand. Super talent doesn’t take you to the Land of Peace; it takes you to Crazyland. And if you ain’t emotionally grounded in something rock-solid, you gonna get annihilated.

I got annihilated. Now I’m getting healed. And part of the healing is dreaming, remembering, and writing.

I can write in peace because I don’t have access to my lethal vices. Being a celebrity in jail also means I have protectors who keep the bad cats away from me. They see I’m serious about writing and form a shield around me.

In prison, I’ve gravitated toward the bookish brothas. I’ve met Muslims who have taken me deep into the Koran. I love and respect Islam. I was raised Catholic but never really studied the Bible till late in life. The Christian brothas in prison have given me a new way to look at the Word. A Jewish man has been talking about Kabbalah, mysticism with wisdom of its own.

Don't worry. I ain't gonna shove no religion down your throat. I'm not using this book to win converts. I'm just using the book to manufacture images from my past. I just wanna look at old pictures, lay 'em out there, and, like a jigsaw puzzle, see if I can make the pieces fit. See if I can make sense of a life of nonsense and understand how I got to be caged up like an animal.

I am an animal, a fuckin' wild animal. I lost my human soul. I lost my human mind. But in this animal cage, my intention is to win back my humanity. Animals can't write.

I can.

I will.

Here goes . . .

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Dustin Alvarez:**

Book is to be different per grade. Book for children until adult are different content. As we know that book is very important usually. The book *Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James* seemed to be making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The e-book *Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James* is not only giving you far more new information but also being your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship with the book *Glow: The Autobiography of Rick James*. You never feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

#### **William Stewart:**

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#### **Rita Beatty:**

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#### **Audrey Mack:**

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