

Q: Rick?

RJ: Yeah?

Q: It's Marc Allan in Indianapolis.

RJ: How are you doing, Marc?

Q: I'm doing fine, how are you?

RJ: Great, great.

Q: Good, good.

Thanks for taking the
time, I appreciate it.

RJ: No problem.

Q: Is it an accident that
you're starting the tour here?

(laughs)

RJ: Well, for all intents and purposes,

really the tour starts,
I think, the first date

is in Chicago at the Regal Theater.

Q: Oh, I thought that Chicago
was after Indianapolis.

RJ: It could be, yeah like I said,

I'm not really, really sure.

Q: Yeah, I think you've got

a couple, it seems to me, if
I read the itinerary right,

you got a couple of warm up dates in LA,

and then the official first date,

they're saying is October
(speakers talk over each other).

RJ: Well, I don't know,
it's, I don't know man.

Naptown's always been
really comfortable for me.

Q: Yeah?

How is that?

Why is that?

RJ: I really don't know.

Ever since I've been going there.

Some of my family's there,

and plus I've always had a real good,

I've always had a really
good taste for Indianapolis.

Q: Okay, all right.

RJ: I love Naptown.

(laughs)

I love that name.

Q: Obviously.

RJ: Naptown.

Q: You'll be surprised,
cause obviously you've been

on the road for a while.

RJ: They told me it's really

been built up and stuff.

Q: Yeah, it's a much bigger
city than it used to be.

So, but anyway, this record, I enjoyed

and I found it really,
kind of interesting.

I read something where
you're describing this

as kind of like an oral
movie of your life?

RJ: Well, yeah.

It's kind of like an audio movie.

Urban Rhapsody album.

Q: Was that your plan
when you started out?

RJ: Well, not really
because when I was down,

when I was incarcerated,
I wrote about 400 songs.

A little over.

And, like I said, a lot of
them were all different kinds.

It's like, a lot of introspective music.

All I had was an acoustic guitar.

I didn't have a bass, I
didn't have any drums.

I wasn't allowed to participate
in any kind of music at prison.

It was kinda like when
Mike Tyson went to prison,

he wasn't allowed to box.

Well, they did the same
thing to me in Folsom.

Thanks be to, that there was a person
that worked in the system of the prison

that really kinda felt bad
that I didn't have things,

you know, and they felt that
the establishment there,

which was an old red neck
establishment, old Folsom,

was really keeping me down

beyond what they should've been doing.

Q: Because they knew who you were?

RJ: Exactly, that had a lot to do with it.

Being black, being Rick
James and all of that.

And you know, all that kinda shit.

So this person managed

to get me a tape recorder

where I would record,
you know, I would write.

And I could write and write and write,

because I don't know how
to write notes and stuff,

and I put it all on tape and then

they would stick the tapes for me.

So that turned out to be a real good thing

over that two year period of being there

cause I managed to get tons of tapes out

with material on it.

And when I got out, after
listening to a lot of it,

I really wanted to do a double,

my first concept was a triple album,

and you know, (mumbles), that's
too much for a triple album.

You know, Prince did a
triple album, didn't do very,

and on and on and on and on.

So I said, well, a double album.

Then I thought of a double album.

Then after really giving
it a whole lot of thought

and listening to a lot of the material,

because I've always
wanted to do an unplugged,

an acoustical unplugged album,

and I, you know, now I've
got about four (mumbles)

in the can, you might say.

And I didn't wanna like
lay a heavy, heavy thing

on people from my history,
back into the industry.

I wanted to kind of ease
back in with familiarity,

stuff that they were familiar with.

So I decided to do Urban Rhapsody.

I'm excited to go back to the
streets, to the street blues.

Very much like, my concept
was a '90s street song thing.

So that's really how Urban
Rhapsody album came into play.

And a lot of the songs are
about, more about my life,

and I didn't lay a lot
of the heavy stuff down

cause I didn't really
wanna burden people's souls

and all that right on the first album.

Q: Are you comfortable talking
about what you've been through?

RJ: Sure, I have no problem with it.

Q: Okay, all right.

One of the lines in there, some things
really stood out to me.

One is I think very early
on in the record, you say,

"I merely forgot where I truly belong."

Can you talk about that?

RJ: Well, you know, coming to Hollywood,

being born in Buffalo
and being more, really,

in the heavy ghetto, it was something

I was always familiar with.

I was always familiar with
blacks, I was familiar

with my ethnic background.

Always familiar with my
Afro-centric culture.

Totally familiar and totally comfortable

with those surroundings.

And I think when I started to,
when I made a lot of money,

when you're making millions of dollars

and you're traveling a lot,
I think you kind of lose

sight of your roots and I think
that's what happened to me.

And when I did lose sight,
I was so disorientated

and so amazed at the things I was seeing

and the things I was hearing
that was really outside

of really my realm.

Not that I don't consider
myself a worldly person,

because I am.

I've been around the
world a bunch of times

and I'm very comfortable
in pretty much any culture.

But the real culture that
I'm really comfortable with,

the thing that I really understand

is my blackness and the ghetto.

That's what I really understand.

That's what I understand,
that's what I feel,

that's what I cry to,
that's what I cling to.

That's what satisfies me.

And I think, during my drug addiction,

I lost sight of that.

I really lost sight of
where I really belonged.

That's really pretty well
what that statement sums up.

I really lost sight of my roots.

My mother passed away of cancer and I was,

about four years ago, right
before I went to prison.

And I was just completely gone, you know,

I was just totally
drugged out all the time.

And totally in another world.

I was in a world, living
in a \$10 million mansion

up on a hill, locked up in a bedroom,

never even seeing the outside of it.

It took me, I don't know,
three or four months,

before I walked out, one day I found out

I had a rose garden on

the side of my house.

I was really isolating myself.

And living a real, kind
of, lonely existence.

And I did nearly forgot
where I belong, you know?

Where I belong is making music

and trying to do something
for myself and my people.

Q: Were you at a point in your life

where you felt like you were so big

that drugs wouldn't have
been a problem to handle?

RJ: Well, I never really thought about it.

I never really thought about my addiction

until my accountants one
day came to me and said,

"Rick, you know, you spend
a million dollars," or,

"You spent a million and
a half dollars on drugs."

You know?

And I said, oh well, drugs
are expensive, you know.

Q: (laughs)

RJ: They said, "Well Rick,

we think you have a problem."

well, I don't think I have a problem.

Meanwhile I'm fucking up all night,

all night, all day, spending
all this money on cocaine.

And isolating myself and I
didn't think I had a problem.

People on the outside can always see

that you have a problem.

No one ever in the inside sees it.

And everybody was so busy kissing my ass

and trying to BS me, and doing this,

that no one really wanted to tell me.

But in the loneliness, so
when I got with myself,

when it was just me and
Rick together, one on one,

I knew I had a problem.

I knew something was
terribly, terribly wrong.

But I didn't know how to fix it.

So my accountant and lawyer
sent me to a couple rehabs.

Even Ringo, from The Beatles,
sent me to one rehab.

Ringo and David Crosby,
from Crosby, Stills & Nash.

They sent me to a rehab once
that did them a lot of good,

and that didn't last with me very long.

I had gone to about three rehabs

and none of that seemed to do any good.

No, I didn't see that I had a problem,

and I didn't really know
until it was really too late.

Q: Can you describe what
a crack high is like?

RJ: Well, I don't know, I mean,

it's like taking that first
hit off a rock, or taking,

you know, I used to snort cocaine.

I used to snort cocaine and
I loved snorting cocaine.

I think, I loved it.

Me and my band, we did it for years

and we never had any problem making albums

and we never had any problem performing

and snorting coke.

It didn't change the
atmosphere and it didn't

change the ambiance of anything, it just,

we thought it was the hip thing to do.

We're making millions of
dollars, so we thought

that this was part of the culture.

In 1981 when I was in Chicago,

is when I first started
smoking, free basing.

And when I, the first hit I ever took

off a free base pipe, I mean, I fell out.

And I said, yeah this is for me.

It completely took me out of my worries.

And a lot of heroin addicts say
that when they shoot heroin.

But you know, I never
really did like heroin,

although I did it a few times.

Crack just seemed to, I
mean, cocaine just seemed to,

just deliver me from
all the ridiculousness

that I was involved in and
the facades that I was playing

and all the games that I was playing

and all the bullshit.

And it just seemed to, it
was just me and that drug.

I didn't need a woman,
I didn't need anything.

I just needed that drug.

And it was just, it's exhilarating.

The first hit is exhilarating
and it's probably

the greatest feeling I
ever had next to sex.

It's 500000 times better than an orgasm.

But after that, you're chasing that high.

You never get that same high after that.

So you're chasing it, so
you're constantly spending

all this money trying to chase that high.

It's easily understandable
why women sell their babies

and people do what they do, crack addicts.

Q: Yeah, I figure it must just be amazing,

because, I mean, and I
tell people, you know,

boy if I could be sure that
I wouldn't be Len Bias,

I would do that drug in a minute,

because think of all the things

that people give up for it,

the high must just be-

RJ: It's the most
amazing, I, you know what,

I grew up smoking weed and stuff,

and even in the '60s, taking
acid, and all that kinda stuff.

And I was able to put that stuff down.

That stuff never had control of me.

Hey, you do it one day, you
don't have it next day, fine.

You don't have it three weeks later, fine.

When you smoke that crack,
when you have that first hit,

it's the only drug in the world.

It's a truity when they say
one hit and you're strung out.

Well, that's very true.

And I never ever thought
there'd be a drug like that.

I guess that's why the government

keeps it in the ghettos,
keeps it in black.

Well, it's even in white suburbia now,

but it's even affected white people.

Drugs, crack doesn't
discriminate who it gets.

It was the most exhilarating, heavy,
incredible thing I'd ever felt.

Like I said, it was 500000
times better than an orgasm,

which was, I should've
known it was dangerous then.

(both laugh)

I really should've.

I had a good friend of mine, a writer.

I won't mention his name, but you know,

he writes for GQ and Rolling Stone

and a lot of different people.

He's a very famous writer.

And me and him were
having dinner once and he,

he was doing an interview
on crack addicts and stuff,

and all that, so he decided,
well the best way to do this

is for him to experience it, you know.

And he did.

And he actually got really
strung out real bad.

He told me this and I was very shocked
cause I didn't know, you know.

And he said he got strung out immediately
while writing the story, you know?

Q: Man, and that's just from one,
he knew he was going into experiment.

RJ: Well, he didn't know,
I don't think he knew it was as strong,
as potent a drug as, I think he thought
that his mind and his strength
and all that kinda shit,
which is all horse shit,
could deal with it.

But that's not true.

I don't give a fuck how smart you are
or how strong you are.

When it comes to crack, it will get you.

There's no two ways about it.

It will get you immediately.

Q: So, at the time that you
ended up going to prison,

there's no way that going
to prison is a good thing,

necessarily, but was it

a good thing for you?

RJ: It was an incredible good thing.

For me, it was a good thing.

Before I went to prison, I was living up,

like I said, this house I got
from Mickey Rooney (mumbles).

And it was hoes, pimps
and hoes and everything.

And I had tons of hoes
that was working for me

and was all kind of things,
which was players ways about it

and there was women every where.

But all that shit, you know,
when you're dealing with

that kind of element, when you're dealing

in that kind of element,
it's an evil element.

All that stuff about
kidnapping and torture,

that stuff never happened, but I mean,

here's a girl who had a pimp,
who feels that they could

get some money out of Rick
James so they could support

their habit, so that's how that happened.

And that's where those stories came from.

There was a girl at a
hotel, yeah, and I said

I had a fight with, a physical fight,

because she actually kicked
my pregnant girlfriend

in the stomach.

So I commenced to, I
commenced to punching her

and it got carried away and
it was a fight with her.

But all that other stuff
about kidnapping and torture,

that wasn't true.

But I did get in a physical confrontation

with this other girl who worked for me

who kicked my old lady in the stomach,

and I got bent out of, I
had been up for two weeks,

and I got infuriated and
I was out of my mind.

Q: It's a good story
though don't you think?

The kidnapping and the torture.

It's a good story, though.

RJ: Well, it's a grand,

it's a wonderful story.

It makes me seem like Marquis de Sade.

It's very decadent and
it's almost romantic.

(both laugh)

It is, old, like Dionysius or something.

But unfortunately it didn't happen.

If I ever do a movie, I
guess I'll put it in there

just to make it look interesting.

(both laugh)

because when I read about
myself, I go, "Damn.

"I did all this for sex?"

God, as much sex as I
was getting, I was like

turning women away from the door.

I never had any problem with sex.

Q: There's an old Warren Zevon song

where he talks about being a drug addict

and he said, he picked up
Rolling Stone, he said,

"I read things I didn't know I'd done.

"It sounded like a lot of fun."

Did that ever happen to you?

RJ: I love that line.

Q: Did that ever happen to you?

Have you read things
that you, well I guess,

this would've been one of them.

RJ: Yeah, that was one of them.

I mean, a lot of things
that I supposedly have done

and shit over the years, I mean,

I can't remember if I did them or not.

But they sure do sound great.

A lot of the orgies, a lot of
the women that I've been with

and a lot of all the other crazy stuff,

I mean, that stuff sounded
like wonderful shit.

I mean, it sounds like, was I there?

Did I do that?

I mean a lot of the stuff
that's been written about me,

yeah it's true, but I mean,
these cops in Hollywood

wanted me so bad.

I mean, if you know

anything about my case,

you know that the DA even, they planted,

they gave a girl heroin in
jail to testify against me.

And I got a lawsuit right
now getting ready to pin

against the whole DA system for that shit.

I mean they gave a girl
drugs in jail to lie.

They schooled a girl to
lie in front of a camera.

You know, this went on and on.

That is such a great story,
now when you read that,

you go, that's gonna blow your mind.

What they did to go, and what
they actually did to nail me,

or to try to nail me.

Anyway, I ended up going
to jail for cocaine

and one charge of assault.

Q: It's, so, they wanted you
just because it looks good

when you get a famous person?

RJ: Oh, no yeah.

They wanted me.

And not to harp on color or anything

but it is a race thing,
it did boil down to that.

Here's this black running
around with long braids

with all these gorgeous
white movie stars and women,

flaunting, smoking weed on
stage, making millions of dollars

running, jumping out of limousines.

Eating at Spago's, drinking
champagne and throwing bottles

out of the limousine.

Let's get that nigger.

That nigga's on the hit list.

They didn't like it, you know.

Q: But anyway, you end up in prison,

this turns out to be a good thing.

RJ: Yeah, you know, Marc,
I thought it was a curse.

I said, oh God I'm cursed, you know,

this is a terrible thing.

Here I am with all these real criminals,

these killers and rapists
and baby, child molesters

and all this shit.

But you know what, it turned
out to be a great thing,

because all the rehabs didn't
give me what prison gave me.

Prison took away my
freedom on a serious level,

and it really put me in
the belly of the beast.

It really put me, I think
out of 3000 cops work there,

I think maybe five or 10 were black.

It was a racist tin,
it's an old institution,

it's like a French Bastille or something.

It's really old, and bricks,
it looks like a fucking castle.

And it's full of racism,
it's full of hatred.

You know, Mexicans, the Aryan brotherhood,

Crips and Bloods, and on and on and on.

The good thing about it
is, a lot of these guys

in this prison had a
love, I think, for me,

because they had grew up with my music

and they had done time, I
had made their time easier.

So I had a blanket of
love when I was there.

I mean, no body was out
(mumbles), anybody who,

no body was out to kill
me, although I heard

there was a contract out on me, you know.

Everybody kind of looked after me.

But the COs, the officers were
the ones I was worried about

because those were the
ones that really wanted me.

Q: Okay.

Did you make reference
to people watching you.

Somebody's watching you,
do you really think that?

Is that still going on?

RJ: On the album.

Well, somebody's watching had to do with

something I used to think
about in prison all the time

because I was under such scrutiny.

I was under, I was under such
scrutiny on a daily basis.

24 hours a day, the police
all wanted to bust me.

They all was hoping
I'd do drugs in prison,

which I didn't.

Inmates were looking at me all the time,

cause everybody was
like, there's Rick James.

You know, it was like a celebrity thing.

So I always felt eyes on me, all the time.

I never could do my time peacefully.

But even when I got out, I find

that I'm still under scrutiny.

I got Bill, my parole officer, you know,

everybody else watching me.

Everybody wondering what I'm gonna do

and all this kinda shit.

That song really didn't
come out of paranoia,

that song just came out of true awareness.

That's about everybody.

I mean, somebody's watching you,

somebody's watching everybody.

Q: Yeah, I mean, you sound really good
and really lucid and I'm taking it that
you're not intending to fuck up again,
am I right about that?

RJ: No, no, no.

You know, but if you know
anything about drug addicts,
you know relapse is all part of recovery.
I'm hoping, I pray to God everyday, man,
that I just stay straight.

And I just, you know, because right now,

I got my family, I have
my five year old son

I'm raising, my old
lady, we got a new house.

I'm excited about life,
man, I'm excited about this.

I'm not getting any older.

I'm in my late 40s.

I'm not getting any older.

I wanna tour, I wanna make more albums.

I wanna do it before, I
wanna leave some kind of

at least for my son,
or some kind of epitaph

that's good and so I don't
leave out of this planet

with Rick James was a
son of a bitch you know?

Q: You mean, in his lifetime, right?

Because you've done a whole
lifetimes worth of work already.

RJ: In his lifetime, exactly.

Q: Okay.

You spent a lot of time on the record,
which I think is interesting,
reminiscing about the good old days.

Talking about how you never
had to worry about gunshots

and this and that.

And do you look at the
way the world is now

and just think, what the hell happened?

RJ: I think it's crazy, man.

I think this is the most insane times
that I've ever seen man.

I've never seen so much
black on black violence.

I've never seen so many untalented people

make so much money so fast.

I mean, the whole young generation.

We got a whole generation
of children out there,

especially black children who, number one,

don't have any fathers.

Who, number two, are slinging
dope and driving BMWs

and everything and everybody's
got a fucking beeper

living in the ghetto like
they're doctors or lawyers.

And they're all doing it under
these scandalous motives.

And then you have these
songwriters that are coming up,

these rappers, which I'm
not putting rappers down.

A lot of them I really
like and a lot of them

are saying good things,
talking about bitches and hoes

and niggers and saying all this kinda shit

and I don't look at that
as good for our people.

And it's like, people
winning Grammys that sample

me and everybody else and they're not even
making real music.

And it's just insane, it's just insane.

And when I wrote Good Old
Days and it was just like,

I just had to say something about,

I had to put something
on the album that just,

in the '80s and the '70s, man, we used to

go to a concert, we
never had to worry about

being stabbed or shot or trouble.

People got together for fun and love,

which is what I'm trying,
when I come to Indianapolis,

that's what I wanna see.

I wanna see people come
out, everyone come out,

for a love thing, man.

Just come out and enjoy yourself

and let's go back to the
times when life was simple.

Not go in and be worried
about if you got a gun

and being searched down for a strap

and wow, man, it's just incredible.

Yes, it does bother me.

It bothers me.

It bothers me, and matter of fact,

it's even bothered me to
the point I've thought

of moving to the Ivory Coast of Africa

or Belgium or somewhere to get my son

out of this environment,
because I don't even want

him growing up in this.

Q: Yeah, well if you're
living in 818 you're,

it's not a great
environment to raise a kid.

RJ: No, not at all.

Q: It's scary.

The world is, the landscape
of music's changed a lot

since your last record came out,

and the market seems to
have a really short memory.

I'm wondering, when you
first came out and said

I wanna make a record, I
wanna get back into it,

what kind of reaction did you
get from record companies?

RJ: From record companies,
they're all paranoid.

They're all paranoid.

Whether I was gonna get high or not.

Was it this or that, has he changed,

what's he like, what's he look it.

(mumbles), how's he sound, all of this.

Will you make a demo out of a solo

or 45 million records, so
they want me to make a demo.

I was pissed.

So I said fuck this.

I got really frustrated.

You know, because people
forget really easily.

You know, there was a time when

I supported companies, you know?

I mean, they forget the Mary
Jane Girls, Eddie Murphy,

they forget the tours and the albums

and the Grammy awards and all this.

They forget all that.

All they remember is that
hey, he's out of prison.

Is he getting high, is he
doing this, he's doing that?

Okay, well that's all fine and dandy.

It's natural for the cause, but still,

it just got to be so
crazy, I decided well,

I'm gonna invest my own
money and I'm gonna make,

put my own album up so I started that.

And this guy, Joe Isgro,
who I became partners with

on this first album and this
was like a fuck you album

to record companies,
cause this is something

for the first time in my entire life,

I own my own master, and
it's a great feeling,

you know what I mean?

Motown doesn't own it, Warner
Brothers doesn't own it,

Berry Gordy doesn't own it.

I own my own master.

And Urban Rhapsody is my first
step in being independent.

And I did it, we did it
all ourselves, you know.

It was, the graphics, everything.

And paid for it ourselves.

Q: And I take it you're gonna go out there

and sell this thing because-

RJ: And I'm gonna go out and sell it

and I'm gonna go out
and try, and give people

some real music without all that crap.

Q: Okay.

You mentioned sampling before,

and obviously, you know
Super Freak was sampled

into one of the biggest
singles of all time,

what do you think of that?

RJ: I think the checks were great.

Unfortunately, MC
Hammer, he, I don't know.

I think he went a little nuts thinking

that he could actually
sample a song, then get

such a big record, and then he could've

carried on that he was creative.

I mean, I don't know what he was thinking.

Rappers need to know that their longevity

on this planet is very short.

And anything, I would tell
rappers, hey you need to learn

how to play instruments,
deal with real instruments.

Sampling, you know,
pretty soon when the FCC

starts coming down and it
becomes a government thing,

it's gonna be hard for
them to say or do anything

without, you know, a bunch of trouble

one way or the other.

I mean, I enjoy the fact
that MC, cause MC Hammer,

at least one thing about MC Hammer,

he was a clean rapper.

He didn't offend anybody.

Q: Right, right.

RJ: I didn't really mind that.

Q: Yeah, I take it that
it was no surprise to you

that his career, you know,
would up being (mumbles).

- No, it was no surprise at all.

Matter of fact, when he came to Buffalo,

my home town, and I saw him
had like seven or eight trucks.

I knew he was through.

I looked on stage, there was
like a hundred dancers and

I said, oh no, oh no, he's just lost it.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

And these rappers seem to be
repeating the same mistakes.

You don't get the impression
that these rappers

are learning from each other, like.

RJ: No, no, man.

You know, I can't really
say anything about it,

because I don't know, I think they're all

on some kinda strange drug, man.

I think they're all like, you know,

they get a little taste of success,

and maybe they'll go off the deep end.

I mean, they'll go into Rick James song

with George Clinton and they actually

think they're creative.

Q: Well, they're creative
because they know the music.

At least they spend a little time learning

about the music compared
to so many kids out there.

RJ: Well a lot of them do.

Warren G's and DJ Quik.

Teddy Riley, you know, I mean
there's a lot of them, man,

that studied old school.

They really do great jobs
and they're really creative.

But then there's a lot of
them who are just out there

doing garbage.

And I guess the kids, I guess
that's what they wanna hear.

That's what they're buying.

But unfortunately, all that garbage,

unfortunate thing is they can't go out

and even do a concert.

Q: Well, yeah and even that.

I mean, you could go, have
you seen any rap live?

RJ: Yeah.

Q: Very rarely is it done well.

RJ: It's very strange.

It's like they stand
there, the kids stand there

and it doesn't really seem like
they're having a good time.

They're just there you
know what I'm saying?

Q: They watch for a bit.

RJ: They're just watching
and looking around,

wondering if they're gonna get shot.

Q: But they also say they look around

and it's like they never
applaud at the end of songs.

Q: No, they don't.

RJ: Isn't that the weirdest?

Q: And the rapper gets up and
he holds his dick in his hand

and he walks back and
forth swinging his hand.

I don't understand it, man.

I don't know, maybe I'm too old.

Maybe there's a generation gap, you know?

Maybe I'm missing something here.

Q: A couple other quick things, if I can.

(both laugh)

Q: When you come out and people see

you playing an instrument,
it just makes me feel like-

RJ: When I go see groups
down from the '80s or '70s,

it warms my heart so much.

I went and saw Larry Graham the other.

Larry Graham, Earth Wind and Fire,

and I saw War not long ago and
the Brothers Johnson and stuff.

And Average White Band.

And I just felt so good,
man, something inside me

just got really warm to
see these groups again

and to really hear real music.

And I'm wanting that
same thing from people

that come to see us.

Q: Just a few other quick things.

One is, somebody asked me
to ask you if you still

do Lucy's Rap.

RJ: Lucy's Rap?

Q: Yeah.

RJ: Yeah, we're gonna
do a little bit of it.

Q: Okay.

RJ: Yeah, we're gonna
do a lot of old songs.

Matter of fact, it's
gonna be a real concert.

Everything's gonna be,
even the tempo of the songs

are gonna be right.

Q: Okay.

RJ: It's not gonna be like the old days

just running through stuff.

We're gonna actually give
a real show of music.

Q: Okay, the Rolling Stone
Encyclopedia of Rock,

the entry on you ends by
saying that there was a rumor

that you were gonna
write your autobiography.

RJ: I did.

Q: You did?

Okay.

RJ: There a few paragraphs,
there's some things

that got to be finished,
but it'll be coming out

probably right after this tour.

Q: Wow, okay.

And are you calling it-

RJ: Memoirs of a Super Freak.

Q: That's what they said it
was gonna be called, okay.

RJ: And I'll be working on it
with David Rich, hopefully.

Q: Okay.

A lot of times it's written
that you first started

your career with Neil Young.

And you know, I never
read any details of that.

Can you tell me what that was like?

RJ: Well, that was in
the village in the '60s.

I had a group called the Mynah Birds.

Really was half of
Steppenwolf, Nick St. Nicholas

who formed Steppenwolf was in the group

and Goldy McJohn, our keyboard player.

He was the keyboard
player for Steppenwolf.

And we kinda broke up after a couple years

and a guy named Bruce Palmer
came and took his place

and Neil Young which
became Buffalo Springfield,

Crosby, Stills & Nash.

But that was in the village in the '60s,

you know, hanging around.

That was with Joni Mitchell and all of us

were playing around
the same coffee houses,

David Clayton Thomas of
Blood, Sweat and Tears.

Gordon Lightfoot and on and on, you know.

It was a great time.

Q: Where is that music,
do you have any idea?

Is there anything recorded?

RJ: I don't know, man.

I would love to find some of it.

I would love to find some of it.

Q: The people you're mentioning,
and the crowd that you're running in,
I mean, they're all pretty cool people,
but that's an extremely white scene.

How did you-

RJ: Yeah, it was.

But I mean, that's when
I was AWOL from the Navy.

I had to hide out.

(both laugh)

Q: You went, did you do Canada?

RJ: I went to the village.

You know, and I happened
just to meet these musicians

and that's when I started my
life in the music industry.

Q: Wow.

RJ: Just walking down
the street and, hello?

Q: Yeah, I'm still here.

RJ: Some of the guys from The
Band, Garth and Levon Helm

and them taking me around,
I was in my sailor suit,

they took me around to coffee houses,

I end up singing in a coffee house

and the group asked me to join them.

But those were great days for me.

And those are great, you know,
music has no color to me.

I mean, I like country
western, I love classical,

I love jazz, I love Brazilian music.

I mean, I love all, I love folk music.

I still listen to Joni
Mitchell, Neil Young, Bob Dylan

and all those guys, you know?

Q: Since you were the master
of funk, nobody expects

that you're hanging
around with Joni Mitchell.

RJ: Yeah, we kinda laughed at that.

Nobody expected Joni to be

such a great jazz artist, either.

Q: Yeah, good point, good point.

For another story I'm working on,

I've been asking everybody I interview,

if you became the overlord of pop music,

what would be the first
thing you would change?

RJ: What would be the
first thing I'd change?

Q: Yeah.

RJ: I don't know, that's a hard question.

I'd change a lot of, I'd change
a lot of content and lyrics.

I wouldn't let, I would want music where

three or four year old, or
five year old, six year old

would be able to listen to
it without being offended.

Q: Anything else going on
that you wanna mention?

We covered a lot of ground.

RJ: Just the tour, I'm really
excited about the tour.

I'm really excited
about Indianapolis, man.

I want people in their
30s and 40s to show up

strong in Indianapolis,
show unity, show love,

and show that we can have
concerts without violence

and that we can have love
and that funk still lives.

And for all those people
who are evoking devils

about Rick James or player hating

as they call it these days,
keep your asses at home.

All I want is people that
wanna see a good show,

wanna hear great music, wanna go back

to the times were simple,
and when people were loving

and caring, cause that's what the concert

and that's what this tour's all about.

Q: Yeah.

Well I wish you the best, and
I hope everything works out.

I hope you stay healthy and
it's good to have you back.

RJ: Hey, thank you man.

Q: You take care, Rick.

I'll see you in a couple of weeks.

Q: Okay, bye bye.

RJ: Bye bye.