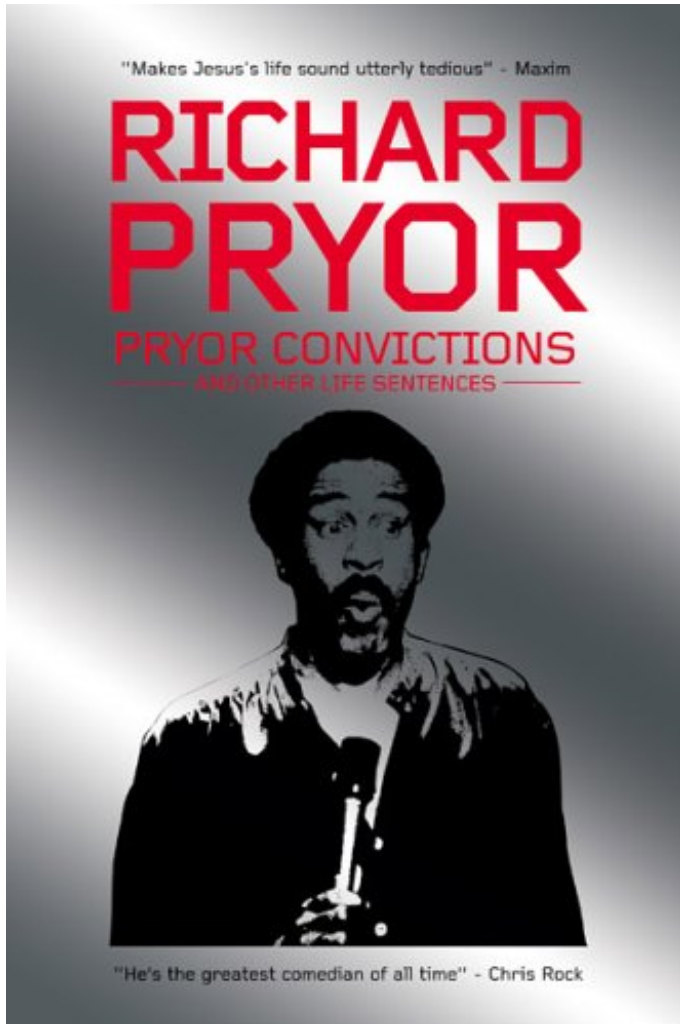

Richard Pryor

Pryor Convictions



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Author: Richard Pryor

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Description

At the height of his career, Richard Pryor did something no other comedian had done up to that point: he took listeners deeply into his life, baring himself before audiences as he exposed his foibles and his follies, his tumultuous dealings with women and his misadventures with drugs. "People can't always handle it," he writes in *Pryor Convictions*. "But I knew that if you tell the truth, it's going to be funny." The pain and truth came from Pryor's earliest years--from his childhood in Peoria, Illinois, where he was raised in bars and whorehouses, and sexually assaulted by an older boy when he was just 6 years old. After a stint in the army, Pryor set out to become an entertainer and began making the slow climb from hole-in-the-wall nightclubs to stardom. Sometimes profane, but always funny, *Pryor Convictions* is a no-holds-barred autobiography told in Pryor's inimitable comic voice.

Insightful reviews

Jack Gattanella: "You all know how black humor started? It started on slave ships. Cat was rowing and dude says, 'What you laughing about?' He said, 'Yesterday, I was king.'"

Richard Pryor. That was one of the Big Names that I heard of when I got into stand-up comedy when I was a teenager. By that point Pryor hadn't done any stand up in years, but his work in the 70's was legendary. I also saw some of his movies of course, like *Blue Collar* (which he barely talks about in the book but shows incredible dramatic depth) and *Lady Sings the Blues* (hell, even in *The Mack* he's great, which he underrated as a low-budget exploitation pic, but I digress). He's the kind of dude that is actually funnier now than when I was younger - though the silly shit is always silly shit - as I've lived more of a life and understood more things about people, race, gender, sex, etc.

This book is some dark, depressing shit about a man who just wanted to look for some sunshine and flowers, and got completely fucked up along the way.

It's not a great book - maybe a few too many if the italicized quotes from his act, albeit they are there for a purpose, usually, which is to highlight how much the truth of his act bled into the truth of his life, as an artist of course it's kind of essential probably - but the pages went by quickly and there was a some humor along the way. It's mostly a tome of how the darkness and despair, of being beaten and (at one point) molested as a kid didn't fuck up a little silly kid from Peoria, despite (or because of) the whorehouses and the players and gamblers and weirdos, it all informed him for later in life.... or rather, they did fuck him up, but he persevered just barely to spin it all into the absurd, which is a gift.

There are some things that could have gone on longer. The book is a breeze to read through - read it in a day, which for a 250 page book isn't common for me - but he only briefly mentions his kids, when they were born at any rate, or about the conflicts with his family as they, as Pryor says, loved his riches and obviously got comfortable from his profits, but still treated him (at least he felt) like the dumb little kid who got raised by his grandmother instead of his actual parents.

Maybe it's for the best though; the book is really the story of a drug addict, or just an addict in general, and when it comes to addiction you only break the pattern or else it breaks you, I suppose. Pryor's candidness and matter-of-fact bluntness carries a lot of the book in such fascinating detail. Of course there's only so many times you can read about a dude doing cocaine, but in a way that's what makes the book so compulsively readable and interesting: even without knowing, say, that he set himself on fire while high out of his mind, or drove all of his (ex) wives crazy but ended up going back to them, you want to find out how, if any, redemption can come.

For a motherfucker like Pryor, redemption wasn't really easy, or wanted most of the time, except for those bits of clarity. Or the MS. Yeah, definitely the MS.

I actually rate this 3 1/2 stars or something - after a point, the repetition gets to be too much. But two things keep it worth reading and a good book: Pryor never loses his sense of humor, as dark and fucked up as it is (and the section on MS is actually quite funny even as he is a sad puddle of his former self), and he doesn't ever go too long in a section about being a sob story. He is clear eyed about his fuck ups, knows them well, but the artistic side isn't diminished either. I got a good strong sense about what his goals were as a comedian, as a performer, and he doesn't mince words about the bullshit he put up with in his career. Ultimately, the thing to take away from such a book is: ain't it something the guy is still alive? (at the time anyway, he died in 2005)

Rodney: If you didn't already know.. Richard Pryor lived his life to the fullest and provides a glimpse into his world. While reading this book, I found myself riding with Richard on the emotional rollercoaster called his life. I enjoyed how his comedy routines were mixed in with the various stories he told. I found this book easy to read (fast 4 days) and at times hilarious. Seriously, found myself laughing out loud during certain parts of the book.

Dave: Greatest comedian of all-time and this is the best and only autobiography by him, obviously. The comedy nerd in me wishes he would actually talk about his process like Steve Martin does. Pryor doesn't mention at all working new material or his struggles being funny. You get the sense that he just WAS more than anyone else. Perhaps this was intentional. But I always wonder how much he prepared for his later specials besides working The Comedy Store. I think it's either for the 'Live' or 'Live on the Sunset Strip' special that he admits that the first of the two tapings was terrible.

Anyways, greatest comedian ever (wait, this is supposed to be about books).

Elizabeth: Firstly, this e-book should be two times as long. It covers pretty well what he talks approximately in his stand-up workouts and pretty well takes each chance to raise up to attainable at once from these routines. Therefore, in case you are already a Richard Pryor fan, you are not getting a very lot extra from this book. Secondly, he must have wrote this e-book

with somebody, a co-author or someone, to suggested him to problematic and reflect. the difficulty is Richard has performed many stuff in his existence that are damaging either to himself and people round him, a lot of which has to do together with his cocaine addition. To his credits he by no means asks for pity or sympathy, he basically states what happened. yet in doing so, he makes no mirrored image on those events, so there isn't any experience of his personal feelings in the direction of them. Thirdly, the saddest factor is the utter absense of his childrens in his existence story. other than to notice their births, they characteristic now not at all. rather than the tip of his lifestyles being approximately turning into a grampa and seeing his young children mature, it is approximately persevered cocaine abuse and lengthy ill-health. it sort of feels like this sort of waste. This booklet is just like the existence it describes, either tragic and funny, yet such a lot of all, a neglected opportunity.

Sarah: the article that units this ebook except the other autobiography i have learn is the brutal honesty of it. Pryor does not attempt to sugarcoat or clarify away his faults. He easily tells you what happened. that is it and that is all. this isn't a romanticized rendering of his life. directly facts, no chaser. it really is intestine clutching-ly hilarious at times, poignant at others, and difficult in places. it is uncooked and actual and that is what we like approximately Richard.

Denise: Sad. Disturbing. Brilliant. You won't are looking to placed this one down! It's an intimate and revealing examine the advanced man or woman in the back of the proficient and debatable performer. Richard Pryor doesn't carry again during this searing autobiography, which was once released approximately 10 years prior to his death. In pulling again the curtain on his life, he permits us to reach at our personal conclusions in regards to the offerings he made, with out remorse or apology—he certainly wasn't looking a pity-party during this book. And despite his very public battles with medicinal drugs and relationships, his used to be really a existence lived on his personal terms.

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