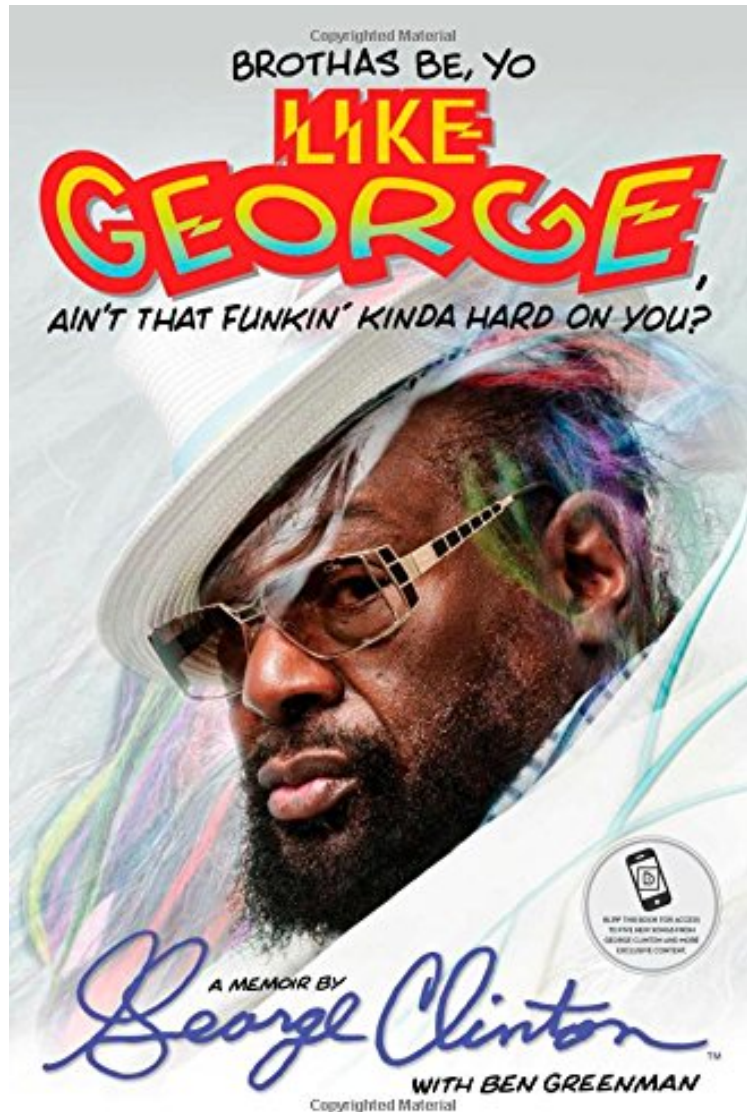


# Brothas Be, Yo Like George, Ain't That Funkin' Kinda Hard On You?: A Memoir

George Clinton

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**George Clinton : Brothas Be, Yo Like George, Ain't That Funkin' Kinda Hard On You?: A Memoir** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Brothas Be, Yo Like George, Ain't That Funkin' Kinda Hard On You?: A Memoir:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Make my funk the Pfunk!By kevinIf you came up on Pfunk, then

this book is for you. It seems like every book I read about musicians, there's always a story about stolen music rights, this no different. I hope George Clinton and the rest of P-funk get all that is due to them before they pass on. Funkateers enjoy! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Game-Changin', Rump-Shakin', Light Years Ahead Of Its Time Story Of The Holy P-FUNK!! By HE WHO FUNKS BEHIND THE ROWS!! As HUGE FAN Of The Brilliantly Innovative Revolutionary Musical Legacy Of George Clinton His Groundbreaking Band, PARLIAMENT-FUNKADELIC, since the mid-70's to the early 80's, I have been waiting for this memoir for well over 25 years now. And I have to say, I was not disappointed. I found George Clinton's storytelling to be candid, funny, and poignant all at the same time. P-Funk was more than just an alternative strain of funk, RB, Rock, Soul, but they brought a whole ethos and paradigm-shift within their game-changing albums, which created a sub-culture all its own. As someone who was a teenager when those brilliant albums and game-changing theatrical concert tours were current selling out arenas all over the U.S., I found myself reminiscing and co-signing on much of what is contained within this book. I bought the Kindle Edition, and have read it twice now. Uncle Jam a.k.a. George Clinton shares his life experiences, and takes you through all that happened culturally and musically before P-Funk came on the scene, what happened behind the scenes of their brilliant whirlwind of creative genius and utter chaos, and he also tells of the tough times of his funk circus, upon its commercial decline in the early 80's. He didn't hold anything back.... which is so typical of THE FUNK. Again. I enjoyed this book, and P-Funk's musical legacy has influenced multiple artists and bands, from every genre of music; from rock, funk, hip-hop, to alternative electronica. ~ May The Funk Be With You ~ 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. If You Hear Any Noise, It's Just Me And The Boys By The Careful Observer During the 1970's, I, along with a number of my peers, were insane Parliament/Funkadelic Fans. At that time, the only individual name out of the P-Funk brand that was known was Boosie Collins. No one in the general public knew who was in charge with the group, or anything. But, as time evolved into the 1980's and beyond, particularly with the release of Atomic Dog the World came to see that George Clinton had been one of the major players behind the scenes, so much so that he has become an icon. I have been a Parliament fan since the release of Mothership Connection back in the '70's. That music brings me more joy than just about any in my life. So, when I learned that George Clinton had a book, I knew I had to read it. This book blows me away! It seems every time George Clinton opens his mouth to say ANYTHING, he either says something classic or profound. Every single time. George Clinton is not just a musical genius. He is a man profoundly wise about life. The gift to us as his fans is that all of his great qualities and characteristics come out in his music. This book is one of the greatest books that I've ever read---and I've read a lot. George Clinton has been in the music business since the 1950's, so by purchasing this book, a person is getting 60 years' experience of musical genius. It's well-worth the price.

In this seminal music memoir, Father of Funk George Clinton talks four decades of hit songs, drug abuse, the evolution of pop, rock, and soul music, his legal pitfalls, and much much more. George Clinton began his musical career in New Jersey, where his obsession with doo-wop and RB led to a barbershop quartet literally, as Clinton and his friends also styled hair in the local shop the way kids often got their musical start in the 50s. But how many kids like that ended up playing to tens of thousands of rabid fans alongside a diaper-clad guitarist? How many of them commissioned a spaceship and landed it onstage during concerts? How many put their stamp on four decades of pop music, from the mind-expanding sixties to the hip-hop-dominated nineties and beyond? One of them. That's how many. How George Clinton got from barbershop quartet to funk music megastar is a story for the ages. As a high school student he traveled to New York City, where he absorbed all the trends in pop music, from traditional rhythm and blues to Motown, the Beatles, the Stones, and psychedelic rock, not to mention the formative funk of James Brown and Sly Stone. By the dawn of the seventies, he had emerged as the leader of a wildly creative musical movement composed mainly of two bands Parliament and Funkadelic. And by the bicentennial, Clinton and his P-Funk empire were dominating the soul charts as well as the pop charts. He was an artistic visionary, visual icon, merry prankster, absurdist philosopher, and savvy businessman, all rolled into one. He was like no one else in pop music, before or since. Candid, hilarious, outrageous, [and] poignant (Booklist), this memoir provides tremendous insight into America's music industry as forever changed by Clinton's massive talent. This is a story of a beloved global icon who dedicated himself to spreading the gospel of funk music.

"Clinton's irrepressible spirit, eloquence, and musical acumen flow full-force through this candid, hilarious, outrageous, poignant, and resounding chronicle of perpetual creativity and hope." (Booklist) "From the barbershop to the Mothership, from doo-wop to hip-hop, Dr. Funkenstein's tale is filled with honesty, insight, and a whole lot of rhythm goin' round. With this book, George Clinton gives up the funk and then some. The Bomb!" (Alan Light, former Editor-in-Chief of Vibe and Spin magazines) A perpetual conceptual moving target, George Clinton has always been more about the dogs than the dogma, and his ideas are always layered deep in the 24 track mix. In this insatiably readable memoir he finally parks his Mothership and tells the tales that the funkateers have wanted to hear for years. (Rickey Vincent, author of Funk: The Music, the People and the Rhythm of The One) "People will come to this book looking for druggy tales and eccentric stories, and they will not be disappointed. However they will also encounter a

highly intelligent, visionary man who happens to have an encyclopedic knowledge of pop music from doo wop to hip hop. P-Funk worked because George Clinton knew how to weave all the threads together." (Nelson George) About the Author George Clinton revolutionized RB during the 70s, twisting soul music into funk by adding influences from several late-60s acid heroes: Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, and Sly Stone. The Parliament/Funkadelic machine ruled black music during the 70s, capturing more than forty RB hit singles (including three at #1) and recording three platinum albums. Ben Greenman is a bestselling author who has written both fiction (most recently, *The Slippage*) and nonfiction (most recently, the hip-hop memoir *Mo Meta Blues*, cowritten with Questlove). He lives in Brooklyn and rarely leaves. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Brothas Be, Yo Like George, Aint That Funkin Kinda Hard on You? THE BOMB The Bomb. Thats the first thing I remember. It was the end of World War II, and I was four years old, living in Washington, D.C., where all the talk was about the atomic bombs the United States had just dropped on Japan: Little Boy on Hiroshima and Fat Man on Nagasaki. People hoped that they would bring an end to the war, because the country was getting worn-out, and not just the soldiers overseas. They were having blackout drills where you had to turn your lights off at seven o'clock at night, and the planes flying overhead couldnt even see the city. Other days there were military aircraft in the sky, rows and rows of them, and an overall sense of power, or threat, depending on your point of view. Nowadays people say they come from military families but back then every family was military: I had uncles who had been in the war and an aunt who was in the WACs. When the first bomb fell on Japan, people were happy, but they were also holding their breath: no one knew what was going to happen next. The only other thing I remember was potato chips. The Wise potato-chip factory was near us, and we could smell them in the air. Atom bombs, potato chips you cant eat just one. I hadnt been born in D.C. I was a proud product of the state of North Carolina, coming into the world in Kannapolis on July 22, 1941. I wasnt born in a hospital, and there are rumors that I wasnt even born in a house, that I emerged into the world in an outhouse. I cant confirm or deny that. I was brought to the city not long after. My parents, George and Julious, didnt live together for the most part, but for a little while they lived near each other. Both of them were government employees: my father worked at the U.S. Mint, disposing of money that had been taken out of circulation, and my mother cleaned up at the Pentagon. When the war ended, we moved again, this time to Chase City, Virginia, a small town about seventy-five miles from Richmond. I remember picking asparagus and running in fields. There were two white kids named Richard and Robert who used to take me and my brother Bobby Raya year younger than me fishing and teach us about farming. They also told us how we should stay inside some nights because the Klan would come riding through on horses, wearing sheets. The way they described them to us, I imagined headless horsemen, holding their own heads like flaming pumpkins. I never actually saw them coming through town, but its a vivid enough memory anyway. Other than that, racism was only an abstract concept to the younger kids in town. There was one movie in town and we all went to the movie, black folk upstairs and white people downstairs. I was a pretty quiet kid. I watched the world because the world seemed so big. About thirty years later, in 1978, I went back to that house in Chase City, and I couldnt believe what I was seeing. There was a well outside that couldnt have been more than two feet deep that I had thought was six feet deep at least. There was a little creek that I thought was a river. I thought the backyard was a mile long and two miles wide. I would run around and not come back until dark. At that age, I didnt have a clear sense of being a musician or a songwriter or an entertainer or anything. I wanted to be whatever I was seeing in the movies: a cowboy, probably. Around 1950, I said good-bye to Virginia, too. It was spring, I think. My father didnt show one day, and not very much was said about it. Some time later, a few weeks maybe, he reappeared, but something was different. He was driving a big black new Kaiser automobile, for starters, and the second he stepped out of the car he told us that we were leaving Virginia for New Jersey. I was excited to leave. It sounded like a fresh start, and not just because of the word New. We were going north. We were going in style, from the first moment we got on the highway all the way into New Jersey. From then on, to this day, I traveled the same routes and got familiar with all of the places, all of the road signs, the cigarette advertisements and so on. When we got into Philadelphia there were advertisements for Buttercup bread, Gillette razors. There were lots of Howard Johnsons lining the highway, and gas-station signs I had not seen before. That sparked my infatuation with being on the road and seeing the rest of the world. How could you not love it? When my family pulled into New Jersey that first day, it was like a different world from Virginia. In Chase City, there had been only one movie house. In Jersey, there was one every four or five blocks, playing *King Solomons Mines* or *Harvey*. There were more cars and kids and street peddlers and less sky and air. My mother moved north soon after my father did, and she ended up in East Orange, about ten minutes from where we lived in Newark. Now and then wed head into New York City, and that was another thing altogether. There were buildings that blotted out the sky. There were more people than I ever knew existed. Work brought my father to New Jersey, and work kept him there. He unloaded ships at the docks, and when he came home at night he had a wagon piled high with potatoes and apples and cabbage that he would sell. That strong work ethic of his was passed down to us, both by example and by constant lecture. All of us who made the move there, Bobby Ray, Tommy, and Shirley (we had three others, Brenda, Robbie, Marie, who moved there later, and Jimmy and Patsy were born in Jersey) were working from pretty early on: not only did we do our chores at home, but he made sure that we got jobs at local stores, too, sweeping up at the end of the day. We did good clean work, not always fun, but thats what my father wanted. He was the boss, and all of us did what he said: get

up in the morning, eat, wash up, clean up, keep things neat, dont get into trouble. He didnt play at all. If I got my sense of hard work from my father, I got my love of music from my mother. My father was a churchgoing man and he liked singing gospel, but he worked all the time so it never really had a chance to take hold. He was part of little groups out of church, though, who organized living-room events where a few friends would get together and sing the hits of the day. He was a Sunday singer. My mother, on the other hand, had the music bug and had it bad. She played records around the house all the time and sang along with them. She liked blues, but not only the pure blues she liked jump blues and rhythm and blues, too, everything from B.B. King and Muddy Waters to Louis Jordan and Wynonie Harris. It was the same kind of music that I would hear later on, in the sixties, coming back to me through British bands like Cream. New Jersey in the fifties was a breeding ground for the next generation of American music, more specifically, African-American music, though it wasnt called that then. In East Orange, my mother lived right next door to Reverend Mancel Warwicks grocery store. He had been a Pullman porter and then a cook, and he had ended up as a promoter for gospel records. He was also Dionne Warwicks father. When we went to visit my mother, the Warwick kids were always out playing in the neighborhood, and I got to know them all: not just Dionne, but Cissy, Dee Dee, the whole family. I used to steal candy out of the reverends store, and my friends and I played at the ballpark up the street, right there in East Orange. I wasnt any good at baseball. I couldnt even be on my own team. They called me Porky and Feet I had huge feet, adult-size by the time I was twelve years old. There was another branch of my family over in Passaic: my aunt and my cousin Ruth, who took me to the apartments in town where the Shirelles were working on Mama Said. I was swept up right then and there. Ruth also took me to the Apollo, where I saw the Drifters, the Chantels, and dozens of other groups. I listened to them obsessively and loved them unconditionally. I loved the Flamingos, who had a huge hit with I Only Have Eyes for You. I loved the Spaniels and especially their lead singer, Pookie Hudson, who became the model for almost every young singer within earshot. I loved the Bobbettes, who were from Spanish Harlem and had a hit with Mr. Lee in 1957, and the Blue Belles, who were from the Trenton-Philadelphia area and featured a girl named Patsy Holt. They had a hit with Over the Rainbow, and she had a real powerful voice even then. Cindy Birdsong, who would later replace Florence Ballard in the Supremes, was also in that group. Years later, when Patsy was renamed Patti LaBelle and I was a hairdresser, I would end up doing her hair. Even without the music, I loved living in Newark, in part because I was royalty. All you had to do was look at the signs. One of the main drags in Newark was called Clinton Avenue, and there was a whole area called Clinton Hills. They were all named after the early American politician George Clinton, who had been the governor of New York and the vice president under Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Some days the world seemed to revolve around me, a George Clinton who could go walking down a street named for him in an area named for him. In the middle of this neighborhood where I was royalty, in 1956, they built a new junior high school, and if you can believe it, they called it Clinton Place. And if you can believe that, in that first graduating class, there were no kids whose last names ended in A or B, so I was the first graduate: George Clinton of Clinton Place. You can believe it all because its all true. As I got a little older, I moved out of the jobs my father got for me and into jobs of my own. I remember delivering milk, working on the Alderney Dairy trucks. I rode a route on Avon Avenue, and the driver of the truck would tell me about all the people who lived there. One of them, he said, was Sarah Vaughan. I knew of her from my parents, who had lots of her records, and a little later she had a big hit with Broken-Hearted Melody. I never saw her, just dropped bottles at her door. Years later we met backstage somewhere and I told her about it. I brought you milk, I said. She kind of squinted and frowned until she realized what I meant. Maybe my most important early employment was on the street named for me, Clinton Avenue. There was a record store there called Essex Records, and I had an after-school job there sweeping up. They didnt do returns too much back then when records didnt sell, they didnt go back to the label, but into the trash bin behind the store and so lots of records ended up there. Some of them I kept for myself, and some of them, especially the white doo-wop groups and the white rockers, I took to school to sell to the kids. I was the record king of Madison Junior High School for a little while. When American Bandstand started, there was suddenly a way of seeing the differences between the artists some of them, much to my surprise, were white. But in the mid-fifties, no one knew and no one really cared. You moved to what moved you and you got your hands on anything that made you feel larger. Little Richard would have been one of the records I sold to the white kids. I got fifteen cents a record. Jerry Lee Lewis was another one of the artists that moved, especially Whole Lotta Shakin Goin On. Jerry Lee was my favorite too. He had a band that was tight as a motherfucker. Elvis was made to be funky and he had a crew surrounding him, but Jerry Lee was funky for real, stupid funky. When he got going he tore shit up. I also loved bands like the Isley Brothers: they were doing it like motherfuckers since Shout in 1959, moving and singing like three Jackie Wilsons all rolled into one.