

Giving Ja a Holla!

Written by Kam Williams



Ja Rule

The "I'm in Love with a Church Girl" Interview
with Kam Williams

Born in Hollis, Queens on February 29, 1976, Jeffrey "Ja Rule" Atkins began rapping professionally while still in his teens, although he really made a big splash in 1999 with the release of "Venni Vetti Vecci." That solo album went platinum on the strength of the single "Holla Holla," thereby kickstarting an enviable musical career which has produced a half-dozen more studio lps while netting the popular hip-hop artist four Grammy nominations and counting.

He also collaborated on hit songs with everybody from J-Lo ("I'm Real") to Christina Milian ("Between Me and You") to Ashanti ("Always on Time") to R. Kelly ("Wonderful"). Meanwhile, he expanded his repertoire to include acting, appearing in such films as "The Fast and the Furious," "Scary Movie 3," "Assault on Precinct 13" and "Shall we Dance," to name a few.

No stranger to controversy, Ja also became embroiled in some famous feuds, most notably, with rival rapper 50 Cent. He was recently released from prison after spending a couple of years behind bars for tax evasion and gun possession.

Here, Ja talks about his new film, "I'm in Love with a Church Girl," a faith-based tale of redemption chronicling the real-life reformation of drug dealer-turned-pastor Galley Molina.

Kam Williams: Hey Ja, thanks for the interview.

Ja Rule: What's happening, killer?

KW: I appreciate the opportunity.

JR: Me too, Kam. Thanks for having me.

KW: I'm originally from your neck of the woods, St. Albans.

JR: [Laughs] No doubt, no doubt! Queens in the building!

KW: I told my readers I'd be interviewing you, and they sent in a lot of questions. Reverend Florine Thompson, who is also from Queens, asks: What interested you in I'm in "Love with a

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Church Girl?"

JR: First of all, I just enjoyed reading the script. Second, I also liked a lot of the parallels between me and the character Miles Montego. Those similarities convinced me that I would like to be a part of the project.

KW: Florine would also like to know whether making this film has influenced your spiritual relationship with your Higher Power?

JR: Absolutely! I've always been a spiritual person who believed in a Higher Power. So, I've always had my 1-on-1 with God, even if I wasn't much of a religious person. But I would definitely have to say that this movie brought me even a little closer to God.

KW: Lester Chisholm asks: Has the experience of working with Pastor Molina on this production enhanced your life?

JR: Definitely! The movie is Galley's life story. Galley Molina's a great inspiration and role model for a lot of young kids out there.

KW: Documentary director Kevin Williams asks: How did you prepare for the role?

JR: One of the things I did was I went to church with Galley to study him, because I thought I'd be doing more preaching in the film.

KW: Was it weird playing him with him right there on the set?

JR: No, that's part of the beauty of doing a true story, having the person that the picture's about there. I felt fortunate to be able to get his advice about how to approach the character and his input about how this or that scene should play out. So, it was great to have Galley there.

KW: What was it like working with this cast, Adrienne Bailon, Stephen Baldwin, Vincent Pastore, etcetera?

JR: Adrienne and I have known each other for a long time. Me and Stephen, too! And Vincent and I worked on two films together prior to this one. So, it was great just being around everybody again and spending time together on the set!

KW: What message do you think people will take away from the film?

JR: This is really an inspirational film which is all about connecting with people who aren't that much into church, although it's for church people, too. That's the beauty of the film.

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles asks: Do you think if gangsta rappers really fell in love with 'Church Girls' they might stop saying horrible and abusive things about females in their songs?

JR: [LOL] Maybe... maybe... She may be onto something. [Laughs some more]

KW: Larry Greenberg asks: Do you think that reggae is at the root of what is happening today in EDM [Electronic Dance Music] and trip-hop?

JR: Trip-hop? I don't know if I ever heard of trip-hop. [Asks his friends if they know what it is.] I'm in a room of hip-hop heads, and nobody ever heard of it. But EDM, absolutely!

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KW: Marsha Evans says she's a resident of Kew Gardens, and a friend of Reverend Run. She says congrats on your daughter's starting at Hampton.

JR: Aw, thank you!

KW: She says she's run into Alan Hevesi [former NYS Comptroller] a few times at the local foreign film theater and that he smiled when she mentioned your name. She'd like to know whether you've applied any of the financial advice you received from him while in prison?

JR: [Chuckles] Heavy D, that's my boy. Alan Hevesi and I forged a great relationship while in prison. I'm glad he's home now. He's an older man, so he belongs home, not behind bars. But I definitely benefitted from his knowledge. I used to pick his brain a lot while we watched the New York Knicks on TV.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

JR: No, I think I've been asked everything under the sun.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

JR: My reflection. [LOL] No, that's a tough question. I see a man that's in the process of growth, going from one end to another.

KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?

JR: A minute ago. I have one everyday, Kam.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

JR: Chocolate lava cake.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

JR: I'm a breakfast type of guy. Don't get me wrong. I can cook, I'm kinda nice on the burner, but I enjoy making breakfast. I do it all... Scrambled eggs... French toast... Pancakes... Breakfast is my thing.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

JR: *Hellbound on His Trail* by Hampton Sides.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0307387437/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What was the last song you listened to?

JR: Oh man, we were just playing something in there, but I can't recall what it was.

KW: What's up for you next, musically?

JR: Actually, I just dropped two new records called "Fresh Out da Pen" and "Everything." They're available on iTunes.

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

JR: That's a difficult question. It's tough to say, because I like a lot of them.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

JR: I'm an adrenaline guy. I like to do stuff that gets my blood pumping, like roller

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coasters or jumping out of planes. I'm into all that crazy stuff.

KW: The Mike Pittman question: What was your best career decision?

JR: **The best decision I ever made, period, was to get into the music business.**

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

JR: **It'd be a toss-up between world peace and ending poverty.**

KW: The Jamie Foxx question: If you only had 24 hours to live, how would you spend the time?

JR: **With my family.**

KW: The Kerry Washington question: If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

JR: **A lion.**

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

JR: **Hmm... Playing with this very noisy popper toy when I was about 4. It looked like a lawnmower, was round at the bottom, and had little balls in it that would go "Pow! Pow! Pow!" We lived in a tiny apartment, so as you can imagine, there was no escaping the popper. [LOL] My mother had to hide it from me.**

KW: The Anthony Anderson question: If you could have a superpower, which one would you choose?

JR: **Invincibility.**

KW: The Judyth Piazza question: What key quality do you believe all successful people share?

JR: **Selfishness. To be the best at what you do in any field, and to accomplish the goals you set for yourself, you have to be somewhat selfish.**

KW: The Gabby Douglas question: If you had to choose another profession, what would that be?

JR: **I'd probably be an athlete, either basketball, football or boxing. I was good at those sports.**

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman asks: What is your favorite charity?

JR: **My own, the L.I.F.E. Foundation.**

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

JR: **Walk carefully! Tread light!**

KW: The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?

JR: **As an artist who was really passionate about his work. And as an inspiration. I do what I do to inspire people.**

KW: Can you give me a Ja Rule question, I can ask other people I interview?

JR: **Yeah, here's a good one: If you had to spend all of your money in a month, how would do it? [Chuckles]**

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KW: That's a great one. Thanks, Ja, and best of luck with the film.

JR: Sure, Kam, thanks a lot.

To see a trailer for I'm in "Love with a Church Girl," visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEmqu0zNkT8>