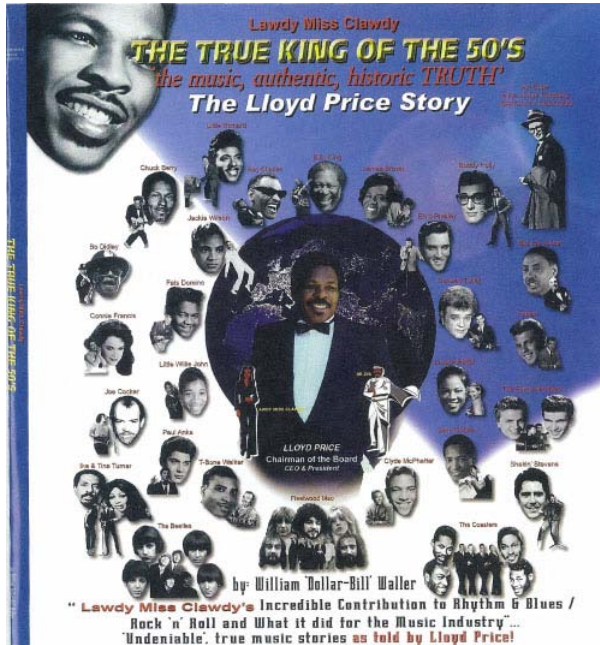


BOOK REVIEW: written by Dean M. Shapiro

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'Lawdy Miss Clawdy ..The True King of the 50's ...The Lloyd Price Story'

By William "Dollar Bill" Waller
Lloyd Price Books, Inc.



Lloyd Price has led a storied life. From his childhood in Kenner, as one of eleven children, he has gone on to become a rock star, record producer, show promoter, entrepreneur and generous philanthropist. In the early '50s, while still a teenager, he had one of the first Rock & Roll hits with "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" then, toward the end of the decade, he had a string of hits that launched him into the realm of superstardom. When his singing career was winding down, he started his own record label that launched Wilson Pickett's singing career. A smart cookie who wrote his own songs and retained the rights to them, Price saved his money, invested wisely and became what he is today – a wealthy

entrepreneur with his own line of healthful food products, as well as a generous philanthropist.

Price's storybook life and career is the subject of this coffee table-sized book by his longtime friend and business partner, William "Dollar Bill" Waller. Within its 104 pages of text and photos, Price discusses in meticulous detail his life, his music career and some of the musicians who influenced him . . . as well as those who were influenced BY him. It is filled with valuable information about the music, the music industry and those who promoted it – namely the great R&R deejays of that golden era.

Having been written by someone so close to the subject of the story, the book could easily have become a fawning tribute but, instead, Waller wisely chose to let Price tell his own story. The book is written throughout in a modified Q&A format with Waller gently prompting Price to tell certain aspects of the story rather than trying to tell the story for him. In his customarily humble manner, Price relates his story without having to embellish it beyond what is already a matter of record. And, for the record, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" has been covered 169 times by other artists. Maybe not a Guinness record but close. Facts like these need no embellishment.

"Lawdy Miss Clawdy" was recorded in 1952 in the now-fabled J&M Recording Studio of Cosimo Matassa on North Rampart Street with Fats Domino on piano. Price's career was launched and he was ready to take on the world but Uncle Sam called and he was drafted into the army. Military service interrupted the careers of many musicians in the 1950s and many of them never regained their footing but Price was an exception. After his honorable discharge in 1956, he picked right up where he left off with "Just Because" and a whole string of hits followed. "Stagger Lee," "Where Were you on Our Wedding Day" "Personality," "I'm Gonna Get Married," "Lady Luck" and several others.

For those keeping score, "Stagger Lee" was re-recorded 269 times by other artists, and "Personality" 152. Little-known, yet significant facts like these would have remained little-known or even unknown were it not for this book.

Filled with stunning, full-page, mostly black and white photos of the great recording artists of the '50s, accompanied by stories about these artists and how they tie into Lloyd Price, these alone make the book worth its nearly \$30 "Price" tag. Price's reminiscences about the greats he has rubbed shoulders with – Fats Domino, James Brown, Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, Elvis, Little Richard, Frank Sinatra and other legends adds even more to the book's worth. But the value of a book like this cannot be computed on just price tag alone. What we have here is a "Price"less contribution to the world's body of knowledge. A volume that may well be read and researched by future historians documenting American culture in the mid 20th century.

And, as an added bonus, each book contains a CD with Price's original version of "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" on it.

The book, unfortunately doesn't have much to say about Price's later career, as a record label owner, an event promoter who staged a big concert in Zaire for Muhammad Ali's "Rumble in the Jungle" with George Foreman, or his present career as an astute businessman and philanthropist. These, too, would make for some interesting reading but maybe Price and Waller are saving that for another book.

Overall, though, the book is a worthy effort that gives proper credit to someone for whom credit is long overdue. Borrowing from the popular expression, "You done your Momma and Papa proud," the man they call "Mr. Personality" has done all of us proud by his accomplishments, his humility and his generosity. A still vigorous and active 77 year old, this book does the Lloyd Price story great and well-deserved justice.

To order "Lawdy Miss Clawdy: The Lloyd Price Story" log on to www.lawdymissclawdy.com.