

RICHARD PRYOR: **ICON**

1 X 55 **HD**



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Richard Pryor is one of the greatest American comics of all time. His impact on comedy and this generation's top comics—who cite Richard as their biggest influence—is unrivaled. He was one of the first black men ever on television. He pioneered a new brand of humor: black man impersonating white man while making fun of himself, and he was a hit. His comedy was universal. His rise to fame was nothing short of miraculous.

But Pryor's comedy was a sign of the times, and in the midst of growing racial tension in the 1960s and the free speech movement, he became increasingly dissatisfied limiting his self-expression to comedy that didn't touch on religion, politics, or race relations. This burden of pretending to be non-controversial proved too great and in 1967 he walked off stage in Las Vegas in front of a sold-out crowd without performing.

Pryor's epiphany that night would change the course of comedy forever. When he finally returned to the stage two years later after a sabbatical in Berkeley, California, he was not the same comic or man. He was more honest than ever with himself—and the audience—and the laughs he drew were even bigger. This raw and unfiltered Richard Pryor not only changed the course of comedy as an art form—he changed the audience itself. And as unimaginable as his exit was in 1967, so was his rise the next decade when he became not just a genius comic but a major film star.

This new episode of ICON, delves into the life and legacy of Richard Pryor, how he came up from the small town of Peoria, Illinois, to performing on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, to being banned by television networks, and embroiled in a pattern of self-destruction that threatened his life.

This documentary defines Richard Pryor's lasting impact on comedy and culture, often in his own words, showing us why he is an American icon.

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CREDITS

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