

Aretha Franklin blasts unauthorized biography

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Ritz, who had been the one to write the authorized biography of the veteran singer in 1999, had differences with Franklin at the time regarding whether or not to include certain passages, and now he has come out with the book he said he's always wanted to write.

However, "Respect: The Life of Aretha Franklin" has enraged the singer of "Freedom" at a time when her most recent album, "Aretha Franklin Sings the Great Diva Classics," has once again placed her on the hit list.

"As many of you are aware, there is a very trashy book out there full of lies and more lies about me. ... (Ritz's) actions are obviously vindictive because I edited out some crazy statements he had the gall to try and put in my book written 15 years ago. ... Evidently, he has been carrying this hatred ever since," Franklin said in her statement.

Ritz, a writer who specializes in putting out biographies of U.S. music stars, including Ray Charles and Etta James, revisited Franklin's life in his current work because, he said, of the "great potential in Aretha's narration."

The book deals with "The sensitive questions - Aretha's mother leaving (the) family, Aretha having two babies while still in her teens, Aretha being beaten by her first husband," and other issues that were "off-limits" when he wrote the singer's authorized biography, entitled "From These Roots."

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"I call the book 'Respect' because I think it's a respectful book. I tried to be understanding and compassionate and that was my goal. ... I love her and I love her art, and I tried to honor her story," Ritz told the Associated Press.

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