



Google "Sparkle" and images of the 1976 film will appear – a classic film detailing the struggles of a young female singer.

Much like the film, Sparkle the singer has been remade. The similarities between "Sparkle" the film and Sparkle the singer are quite ironic... being mentored just as the main character only her mentor was no love interest named Stix, he was more like a brother who we all know as R. Kelly.

Transparent and ready to set the record straight, Sparkle isn't holding back. There is no secret that her longtime friend and mentor, R. Kelly, was charged with child pornography and Sparkle was called to testify against Kelly as the child in question is Sparkle's niece. Although the trial caused division in her family and put her music career on hold the platinum-selling artist has overcome adversity and understands the only way to reach her fans is to air her dirty laundry.

I spoke with the R&B diva about everything from her zodiac sign to business and personal relationship with singer/producer R. Kelly.

AP: Your musical foundation began in church, how influential is church in your musical career now? And what other things influence your love for music?

Sparkle: (Church) is very influential because it is my foundation and my first love for music. The rush I get from a great hymn or praise and worship song is for me everything. Other influences; I just love a great story. Everybody loves something that they can relate to.

AP: We fell in love with you and it felt like you vanished. Where have you been and why the long break?

Sparkle: My hiatus was by default. I had to deal with an unfortunate set of circumstances. I always had/have my family as a first priority. This was one of the biggest ordeals of my life, it had taken such a toll on me emotionally that people around me decided that this needed to be completely – or almost completely – out of my system before moving forward creatively doing anything.

Polished and shining bright as before

Written by Alyesha 'AP' Price

AP: Obviously you're coming back with a vengeance. The "Dirty Laundry Remix" has everybody talking. Why were you attached to this song? How therapeutic was it to make this song?

Sparkle: First off, I thought the song was really dope. Kudos to Kelly (Rowland) and The Dream. Second, the song felt like a Sparkle song. It sounds like a Robert-produced track that I was all too familiar with. As far as content, I thought it was fitting for me to remix it and put my spin on it. I find it therapeutic to talk things out in whatever form you can and this was my way of talking it out.

AP: In Dirty Laundry you say, "Ya'll don't know the half of this industry." What are you referring to? What are the things aspiring singers or women in the industry should beware of?

Sparkle: There're so many layers to this industry. The makings of a great song or album are the easier part of this industry. After that, you have to massage and deal with the many personalities, egos and insecurities of the people you are working with and/or have to go through. For men, they have to portray a certain level of gangster or toughness, and it's worse for women --it can come down to who you (are having sex with) or willing to (have sex with). Neutral parties are afraid or don't wanna stand up to what or who they feel are giants, so when they know something isn't right they'll go hide face or sweep it under the rug as if nothing ever happened. A shame, right? Women, we just need to stick together and be supportive of one another. Men already have an upper hand, (women) shouldn't give 'em much more by giving in to what I previously mentioned, belittling, or (defecating) on one another for a position.

AP: When you came on the scene in 1998, R&B music was dominating the airways, but you created your own lane. What made you stand out then and what are you bringing to the game now?

Sparkle: I have to give a bit of that credit to Robert as well, he created that "lane," but it stemmed from my true personality – real and low tolerance for bull. I naturally stayed to myself, so he would write records that had a sexy, mystic and realness to them. I'm still going to bring you Sparkle, with more transparency to my current world.

AP: You've mastered songs for the broken hearts of women everywhere; what connects you with those slow "get your mess together" ballads?

Sparkle: It's my personality again. If I were just talking to you about a relationship that you shouldn't be in anyway, I tell you "get your (stuff) together and get over it." Music isn't any different for me. I'll say to you in music what I'll say to you in your living room – especially if we're supposed to be girls and my female fan-base are "my girls."

AP: You're a natural storyteller. How much of your upcoming project will detail your experiences over the past 10 years? How much do you plan to share about the trial or your personal life in general?

Sparkle: The upcoming project will definitely bring you up to speed on my last 10 years. I don't know exactly how much, but it'll be in there, and not the things that have been wrongly

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publicized, there's other (stuff) that has yet to be touched. It may be in "concept," but it'll be in there.

AP: Sometimes highs become lows overnight; you sort of touch on that in "Dirty Laundry." What kept you strong during the low times?

Sparkle: My faith kept me strong, along with a few loved ones who held me down, for real for real.

AP: If there is one misconception that you want to clear up, what would it be? What do you want people to know about Sparkle?

Sparkle: Wow, just one? There's a few. I think the one that sticks out most is that I'm mad with Robert about my career. Not at all. It's hard to get people to understand that I knew Robert was a great producer, songwriter, etc. even when I asked for my release. I knew what I was leaving, but more importantly, why I was leaving. Robert was my family.

Hopefully, you can grasp what I'm getting at.

Imagine having an older brother that's gifted in some area that watched you until your parents got home from work. Remember it's your brother, but he doesn't want you in his room, around his friends, or going outside. You'll eventually ask him – or your parents – if you could go to your friend's house until the parents get in. That's all I did. Furthermore, your reaction to his gift won't be the same reaction that friends from school reaction would be. I acknowledged and appreciated his gift, but it was my brother's.

AP: Lastly, you're a Taurus – so am I. How much of the stereotypical bull-headed, stubborn characteristics are true when it comes to your personality?

Sparkle: I'm a sweetheart until you (screw) with me, then the horns surface.

To connect with Sparkle and witness her path back to the top, follow her on Twitter @iSparklei.