

# Hip-hop icon Slick Rick pardoned in New York

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Pioneering rapper Ricky "Slick Rick" Walters, who spent more than five years in prison on a 1991 attempted murder conviction and faced threats of deportation after rehabilitating his life, was granted a full and unconditional pardon Friday by New York Gov. David Paterson.

Walters, 43, has been under threat of being sent back to his native United Kingdom, although he has lived in the United States since he was a child. In a statement, he expressed gratitude to Paterson and his lawyers, and hoped that he could finally put the turmoil behind him.

"This has been a long and difficult road, and I am happy for this to be settled once and for all," Walters said. "I look forward to enjoying this time with my family and friends



**Ricky "Slick Rick" Walters** and to continue leading an honest and productive life."

In announcing the decision, Paterson noted Walters' commitment to helping young people.

The eye patch-wearing star behind '80s rap classics like "La-Di-Da-Di" and "Children's Story" was a successful rapper when he was convicted of shooting his cousin and another man in 1991. Both survived.

Although he had completed probation requirements in the attempted murder case and resumed his musical career, he was arrested again in June 2002. Immigration agents stopped him after he returned to Miami from a weeklong Caribbean cruise where he was a featured performer.

The arrest was on a 1997 Immigration and Naturalization Service warrant that had not been pursued earlier, and he spent 17 months in jail,

despite calls for Walters' release from such luminaries as Rev. Jesse Jackson, Will Smith and Chris Rock.

A federal judge eventually ruled in October 2003 that the Bureau of Immigration Appeals denied Walters' due process when it issued the warrant, but Homeland Security officials pressed forward in the case. In 2006, Walters told The Associated Press he was simply going to keep working and play out his appeals.

"If you were in my shoes, how would you look at life?" he said then. "You'd ride life out, too. Anger would just make life not enjoyable, you know what I mean?"

The Democratic governor noted that Walters is now a rap artist and landlord in the Bronx who has not had any other criminal problems since his release from prison and has volunteered at youth outreach programs to counsel against violence.

"Mr. Walters has fully

served the sentence imposed upon him for his convictions, had an exemplary disciplinary record while in prison and on parole, and has been living without incident in the community for more than 10 years," Paterson said. "I urge federal immigration officials to once again grant Mr. Walters relief from deportation, so that he is not separated from his many family members who are United States citizens, including his two teenage children."

## DJ's lawsuit against NY councilman sunk

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal appeals court says a city councilman did not defame a fired DJ when he called him a "sick, racist pedophile" for making sex-laced rants about a rival's young daughter.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan issued its ruling recently in a case DJ Star brought against Councilman John Liu.

DJ Star (real name: Troi Torain) had appealed a ruling by a lower court judge who also concluded that Liu was within his rights.

Torain was briefly charged with child endangerment and fired from WWPR-FM's "Star & Buc Wild Morning Show" in 2006 after commenting about the wife and 4-year-old daughter of rival DJ Raashaun Casey. The child endangerment charge was later dropped by prosecutors who said they wanted to spare the girl further attention.

The hip-hop disc jockey was fired from the station known as Power 105 after he offered listeners \$500 for information about Casey's daughter's school and made sexually charged remarks about her. Torain also used a racial slur to describe Casey's wife, who is part Asian.

The appeals court noted that under New York and federal law, expressions of pure opinion rather than statements of fact are protected by the Constitution.

The appeals court said a reasonable listener of the statements could not have believed that they were intended to convey objective facts in the context they were made.

Liu reacted to the ruling by saying it was good news that no more taxpayer money will be wasted by Torain's lawsuit.

A message left with Torain's lawyer was not immediately returned.

## Sweet Release

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I'm calling you out... You are our worst enemies and our worst liabilities, our worst representatives. Your smug recalcitrance has become bothersome. You are bums, plain and simple." So, it is no surprise that barely pausing to take a breath, he calls jive brothers on the societal carpet for their refusal "to stand up and take responsibility for their children, their community or even themselves," which he sees as "the greatest calamity visited upon Black America today."

"Sweet Release," a bitter pill to swallow, but so shockingly confrontational that its prescription for Black sanity is a must read, despite the doctor's apparent right-wing political allegiances.



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