



# Jumpin Jack Flash: David Litvinoff and the Rock 'n' Roll Underworld

*Keiron Pim*

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**A fascinating quest for one of London's legendary characters.**

David Litvinoff (1928-75) was 'one of the great mythic characters of '60s London' -- outrageous, possessed of a lightning wit and intellect, dangerous to know, always lurking in the shadows as the spotlight shone on his famous friends. Flitting between the worlds of music, art and crime, he exerted a hidden influence that helped create the Kray twins' legend and Lucian Freud's reputation as a man never to be crossed; connected the Rolling Stones with London's dark side; redirected Eric Clapton's musical career; and shaped the plot of the classic film *Performance* by revealing his knowledge of the city's underworld, a decision that put his life in danger.

Litvinoff's determination to live without trace means that his life has always eluded biographers, until now. This extraordinary feat of research entailed 100 interviews over five years: the result is by turns wickedly funny, appalling, revelatory and moving, and epic in its scope as it traces a rogue's progress at the interface of bohemia and criminality from the early Fifties to the Seventies. It is also an account of Keiron Pim's determined pursuit of Litvinoff's ghost, which took him from London to Wales and Australia in a quest to reveal one of British pop culture's last great untold stories.

His interviewees span all the worlds in which Litvinoff moved. They include musicians such as Eric Clapton and Marianne Faithfull; actors including *Performance* stars James Fox and Johnny Shannon; upper class friends of Litvinoff's such as society antiques dealer Christopher Gibbs and the eccentric Lord Harlech; criminals such as 'Mad' Frankie Fraser and associates of the Kray twins; artists Martin Sharp and Nigel Waymouth; writers such as Iain Sinclair, Alan Moore and David's half-brother Emanuel Litvinoff; and Bob Geldof, who now owns the house in which Litvinoff committed suicide.

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