



THE VOICE OF ROCK

Glenn Hughes has chalked up over 50 years in the music business and in that time has produced an incredible canon of work. In an exclusive, wide-ranging and revealing interview *Howard Johnson* spoke to Hughes about his amazing life and music...

GLENN HUGHES IS UP nice and early to take my call. It's only nine o'clock in the morning at his home in Los Angeles, but the 68-year-old is bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. "I have four dogs and they like to be fed early," he chuckles. The voice – the first thing many of us conjure up when we think of the singer and bassist – sounds remarkably strong for a man of his age. The accent is English West Midlands meets American California as you might expect. But there's something else in there that I can't quite place. Something almost Irish, perhaps...

No matter. Glenn Hughes can justifiably make a claim to having the finest rock voice of all time, and he's ready to talk to *Rock Candy Mag* about every aspect of his long and illustrious career. When he illustrates a point during our chat he sings me a single line of a song. Even down the phone, it literally sends chills down my spine.

Glenn is charming, communicative and patient as he answers my questions throughout our very long, two-and-a-half hour conversation. He refers to himself in the third person every so often. I suspect that might be the by-product of therapy he undertook to rid himself of severe drug and alcohol addictions that threatened to take his life in the '80s. That was all a long time ago, of course, and Hughes says he's been clean since the early '90s.

"The first thing I do in the morning now is meditate and get into a space of awareness," he explains. "I have to do it. I've been at it for a while now, but I need it to nourish my own spirit, to be quiet and peaceful. I'm a lot quieter than people know. I may be loud on stage, but off it I need to be quiet."

Hughes has always been open about all that addiction stuff and so it's been exceedingly well documented already. I'm not here to rake over those particular coals again, even though he talks candidly to me about his severe problems. But as is the *Rock Candy Mag* style, this interview is all about the *music* that Glenn Hughes has produced over a career now spanning more than 50 years. And what music! Hughes has a huge canon of work that we can discuss, and it contains some of the finest, most varied songs ever recorded under the general umbrella of rock. So what are we waiting for? Without further ado...

YOU WERE BORN AND RAISED IN CANNOCK IN THE WEST MIDLANDS. WHAT WAS IT LIKE GROWING UP THERE IN THE '60S?

"I had a very normal upbringing and my parents were both great people who encouraged me in everything I ever did. I loved sport – football was very important to me – but even as a pre-teen I was already a fan of music. Maybe that was inevitable. I was named after [1930s/40s trombonist and big band leader] Glenn Miller, after all. I played the recorder and the piano when I was pretty young, and sang in the school choir with 30 other boys every Thursday afternoon. While I was doing it I remember seeing the teachers talking to each other through the back of their hands about someone. They were talking about me. I never realised I had a voice until much later, but the teachers told my mum and dad I had perfect pitch at the age of 10. That was probably the start of it..."

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