

Jumpin' Jack Flash

(The Rolling Stones)

Watch it!

I was born in a crossfire hurricane
And I howled at the maw in the drivin' rain
But it's all right now, in fact, it's a gas
But it's all right, I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash
It's a gas, gas, gas

I was raised by a toothless, bearded hag
I was schooled with a strap right across my back
But it's all right now, in fact, it's a gas
But it's all right, I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash
It's a gas, gas, gas

I was drowned, I was washed up and left for dead
I fell down to my feet and I saw they bled
Yeah, yeah
I frowned at the crumbs of a crust of bread.
Yeah, yeah, yeah
I was crowned with a spike right thru my head
My, my, yeah
But it's all right now, in fact, it's a gas
But it's all right, I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash
It's a gas, gas, gas

Jumpin' Jack Flash, its a gas
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"Jumpin' Jack Flash" is a song by English rock band the Rolling Stones, released as a single in 1968. Called "supernatural Delta blues by way of Swinging London" by Rolling Stone magazine, the song was perceived by some as the band's return to their blues roots after the baroque pop and psychedelia heard on their preceding albums, *Aftermath* (1966), *Between the Buttons* (1967) and especially *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (1967). One of the group's most popular and recognisable songs, it has featured in films and been covered by numerous performers, notably Thelma Houston, Aretha Franklin, Tina Turner, Peter Frampton, Johnny Winter and Leon Russell. To date, it is the band's most-performed song, having played it over 1,100 times in concert.

Written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, recording on "Jumpin' Jack Flash" began during the *Beggars Banquet* sessions of 1968. Regarding the song's distinctive sound, guitarist Richards has said:

I used a Gibson Hummingbird acoustic tuned to open D, six string. Open D or open E, which is the same thing – same intervals – but it would be slackened down some for D. Then there was a capo on it, to get that really tight sound. And there was another guitar over the top of that, but tuned to Nashville tuning. I learned that from somebody in George Jones' band in San Antonio in 1964. The high-strung guitar was an acoustic, too. Both acoustics were put through a Philips cassette recorder. Just jam the mic right in the guitar and play it back through an extension speaker.

Richards has stated that he and Jagger wrote the lyrics while staying at Richards' country house, where they were awoken one morning by the sound of gardener Jack Dyer walking past the window. When Jagger asked what the noise was, Richards responded: "Oh, that's Jack – that's jumpin' Jack." The rest of the lyrics evolved from there. Humanities scholar Camille Paglia speculated that the song's lyrics might have been partly inspired by William Blake's poem "The Mental Traveller": "She binds iron thorns around his head / And pierces both his hands and feet / And cuts his heart out of his side / To make it feel both cold & heat."

Jagger said in a 1995 interview with *Rolling Stone* that the song arose "out of all the acid of *Satanic Majesties*. It's about having a hard time and getting out. Just a metaphor for getting out of all the acid things." And in a 1968 interview, Brian Jones described it as "getting back to ... the funky, essential essence" following the psychedelia of *Their Satanic Majesties Request*.

In his autobiography, *Stone Alone*, Bill Wyman has said that he came up with the song's distinctive main guitar riff on a piano without being credited for it.