A.C. Reed - I'm In The Wrong Business (1987)

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01. I'm In The Wrong Business 02. I Can't Go On This Way 03. Fast Food Annie 04. This Little Voice   05. My Buddy Buddy Friends 06. She's Fine 07. These Blues Is Killing Me *play*
08. Miami Strut 09. The Things I Want You To Do 10. Don't Drive Drunk 11. Hard Time *play*
12. Going To New York 13. Moving Out Of The Ghetto
A.C. Reed (vocals, tenor saxophone);   Bonnie Raitt (guitar, background vocals);   Stevie Ray Vaughan, Maurice John Vaughan, Marvin Jackson,   "Triple Horn," Steve Ditzell, Larry Burton, Phil Guy (guitar);   Jimmy Markham (harmonica);   "George" (piano);   Freddie Dixon, Douglas Watson, Johnny B. Gayden, Nate Applewhite, Aron Burton (bass);   Casey Jones (drums);   Miranda Louise, Vicki Hardy (background vocals

A.C. Reed was the blues world's ultimate triple-threat. His soulfully elegant tenor sax playing supported artists like Albert Collins, the Rolling Stones, Buddy Guy and Eric Clapton. As a singer, A.C.'s gritty, straight-from-the-heart vocals were showcased on a variety of small label singles, as well as on his acclaimed four albums. As a gifted songwriter with a penchant for wryly humorous lyrics, his tunes were recorded by such artists as Magic Slim, Charlie Musselwhite and Eddie Shaw.

Born Aaron Corthen in Wardell, Missouri in 1926, A.C. was immediately attracted to music. "I've been around music all my life," he said. "I had one brother who made himself a bass out of a wash tub, and another brother who played the piano."

For A.C., though, neither bass nor piano would do. He had his heart set on playing the saxophone. Realizing that rural southeast Missouri offered limited opportunities, A.C. arrived in Chicago in 1942 at age 16. He quickly found work at a steel mill, and bought a saxophone at a pawnshop with his first paycheck.

A.C.'s first interest was in big band jazz. He studied at the Chicago Conservatory of Music for a couple of years, where he emulated his musical hero, tenorman Gene Ammons. While continuing to work at the mill during the daytime, A.C. began gigging on weekends with blues groups. At the same time he found a musical mentor in J.T. Brown, Elmore James' tenor saxophonist. It was Brown who personally showed him the differences between playing jazz and the blues. "The first thing he taught me," A.C. recalled, "was to play less notes, play simpler and try to tell a story with my solos."

After the end of World War II, A.C. found a steady gig with Willie Mabon, who snatched up the young tenorman as soon as he was old enough to work in Chicago's South Side nightclubs. Next was a stint with legendary guitarist Earl Hooker, followed by four years of touring the Southwest with bandleader Dennis Binder's Rhythm & Blues All Stars, playing exclusively for white audiences. "We were what they called rock 'n' roll," recalled A.C. "We were all playing the same thing--Little Richard, Fats Domino. They called it 'R&B' back then, but when Elvis Presley came along singing black music, they decided to call it 'rock 'n' roll."

By the early '60s, A.C. was back in Chicago, where he cut several singles as a leader for Age Records, backed by his old pal Hooker. He went on to cut singles for labels like Nike, USA and Cool throughout the '60s, while doing session work with Hooker, Muddy Waters, Ricky Allen and Lillian Offitt.

In 1967, at the start of the late '60s blues explosion, A.C. hooked up with guitar great Buddy Guy and blues harp giant Junior Wells. For ten years he backed Buddy and Junior, playing to a new audience of young, white blues fans all over the U.S. While working with Guy and Wells, A.C. also toured with the Rolling Stones and performed in Africa and Japan. He also appeared on a number of Guy and Wells' albums on the Vanguard, Delmark and Atco labels. Following his long association with Buddy and Junior, A.C. took some time off from the road to play local dates in Chicago. His retirement from the road was short-lived, however, as he joined Son Seals for a European tour in 1978. Next came a five-year gig with Albert Collins, appearing on five of the late Master of the Telecaster's Alligator albums. While playing with Collins' bands, the Icebreakers, A.C.'s gruff vocals were showcased on several tunes each night. His own "Jealous Man" was one of the highlights of Collins' Grammy-nominated Alligator album, Live In Japan. In 1980, A.C. contributed four songs to another Grammy-nominated Alligator album, Living Chicago Blues, Vol. 3. Three of those tunes appear as added bonus tracks on his Alligator release, I'M IN THE WRONG BUSINESS!

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Take These Blues And Shove 'Em, his long-awaited debut album, was finally released in 1982 on the Ice Cube label. Featuring such tongue-in-cheek observations of the musician's lot as "I Am Fed Up With This Music" and the title track, the album received unanimous praise. "I Am Fed Up With This Music" even received a Blues Music Award nomination for "Blues Single Of The Year."

With A.C.'s Alligator release, I'M IN THE WRONG BUSINESS!, he put it all together, resulting in a winning combination of top-notch material and inspired playing and singing that put him firmly in the musical spotlight. The album featured guest appearances by long-time A.C. Reed fans such as the late Stevie Ray Vaughan and Bonnie Raitt, as well as by members of his Chicago-based touring band, the Spark Plugs.

Following his Alligator release, A.C. and the Spark Plugs hit the road and became a fixture on the national blues club and festival scene, establishing him as one of the premier "old school" artists of Chicago blues and a flamboyant entertainer. Albums on Delmark and Black & Blue followed. A.C. continued to perform and tour through 2003. He died of cancer on February 24, 2004. ---amazon.com

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