

MIAMI New Times®



Adam Rippon / Photo by Aaron Jay Young

Olympic Figure Skater Adam Rippon Pens Comedic Memoir, Sets Sights on Hollywood

CAROLINA DEL BUSTO | NOVEMBER 19, 2019 | 8:10AM

Adam Rippon is a professional figure skater, an Olympic champion, the first openly gay U.S. male athlete to win a medal in a Winter Olympics, self-proclaimed “America’s sweetheart,” a contestant on *Dancing With the Stars*, and now a published author.

Before Rippon was any of those things, he was a small-town kid from Scranton, Pennsylvania, with big dreams and outsize ideas about his natural ice-skating abilities. "The first time I went skating, I just thought I was going to be amazing," he recalls. After persuading his parents to take him and his younger siblings to a rink, 5-year-old Rippon was ready to step onto the ice and let his innate talents impress everyone.

Instead, he set one foot on the frozen surface and fell. "I never wanted to do it again!" Rippon quips. However, instead of making him feel defeated, the early incident only strengthened his resolve. "I look to that young kid and... I wanted the world for myself. I set such big dreams and aspirations for myself, and I never questioned that they couldn't happen."

Competing at the Olympics was one such dream he would eventually achieve. When he made the U.S. team for the 2018 Winter Olympics, Rippon was the oldest first-time Olympian in figure skating since the 1920s. Would he try out for the U.S. Winter Olympic team again? "Fuck, no," he says.

"I was so proud of myself for being in the best shape of my life at 28, but I also knew the 2018 Winter Olympics were going to be my first and last game," he adds. "I'm sure I'll be back, just in a different capacity."

Rippon, who turned 30 this month, released his first book, *Beautiful on the Outside: A Memoir*, earlier this year. His book tour will culminate with a stop in the Magic City during the Miami Book Fair, where he's slated to participate in a conversation with fellow author Gary Janetti Saturday, November 23.

While on his book tour, Rippon has had the opportunity to engage with fans in a deeply personal way. "Getting to meet people and know that I was able to help them in some sort of way by sharing my story is a little emotional, but I'm so grateful to have those interactions."

Miami will be a special stop for the athlete not only because it'll be his first time visiting the Magic City, but also because "it's the only stop that I'll do as someone in their 30s," he says.

Told through his unique wit, *Beautiful on the Outside* captures Rippon's essence. Readers will laugh along with the Pennsylvania native and finish the book with a newfound appreciation for what inspires and motivates him.

But really, Rippon simply wants readers to enjoy his sense of humor.

"I hope they laugh with me and at me," he says.

Rippon says one of the larger themes of *Beautiful on the Outside* is the importance of learning from your failures. "I used to be really embarrassed by all the times I failed," he admits. "But when I owned them and chose to learn from them, I realized that there's no such thing as failure, only lessons... The difference between being the winner and being a champion is that the winner can wear a gold medal, but a champion is in it for the long haul."

Despite the book's cheeky title, Rippon knows that looks aren't everything. He says *Beautiful on the Outside* is more about his journey of self-discovery and self-love. "I can tell you, the way that I felt when I won that Olympic medal was the same feeling I felt when I was 5 years old and was able to tie my shoes myself for the first time," he says. "That feeling of joy and accomplishment is so personal and so relative to an experience."

Conquering Hollywood, an industry as cold as they come, is the next item on the Olympian's agenda. This summer, Rippon launched a YouTube series in which he interviewed some of his famous friends while ice skating. More recently, he received a series order from the new streaming service Quibi.

"The show is called *This Day in Useless Celebrity History*," Rippon explains. True to its title, the program will see him cover useless celebrity history corresponding to the date each episode will air, and "no matter how dumb and stupid it is, we're going to treat it like I'm Barbara Walters and getting down to the bottom of it."

Rippon will begin filming the show in December for an April 2020 release. Even after writing a book, cementing his place in sports history, and having his image beamed onto millions of TV screens across America, he hopes to scale even more heights in the years to come.

“I want to do things where I can make people laugh and entertain, because it’s where I feel the most myself,” Rippon says. “And I hope that in the next ten to 15 years, I can accomplish a lot in this new sort of avenue in my life.”

Miami Book Fair 2019: Two Memoirs: A Reading With Adam Rippon and Gary Janetti. *5 p.m. Saturday, November 23, in Room 2106 at Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus, 300 NE Second Ave., Building 2, Miami.* miamibookfair.com. Tickets cost \$10.

RELATED TOPICS:

[ARTS](#)

[BOOKS](#)

[INTERVIEWS](#)

[THINGS TO DO](#)

Use of this website constitutes acceptance of our [terms of use](#), our [cookies policy](#), and our [privacy policy](#)

©2019 Miami New Times, LLC. All rights reserved.