

## Symba Bio

Every twist, turn, and bend in the road grants wisdom.

A turbulent, often unbelievable trip brought Symba to his destiny. The Bay Area-born and Los Angeles-based rapper lived through despair and delight in equal measure, saw poverty and riches firsthand, faced down betrayal and achieved triumph all at once, and endured a handful of detours before actualizing his purpose—to simply rap. This experience drove him to deliver an onslaught of singles and projects for Atlantic Records in 2020 and beyond.

“I’m seasoned like the chicken before you put it in the oven,” he smiles. “I’ve been through it all. I’ve fucked up so many times. I’ve seen so much. I’ve put projects out. I’ve performed on big stages. I’ve found my identity now. I’m in the zone and building it out. I know exactly what I’m talking about and who I’m talking to. I’m telling stories about hustling and making money. I call it ‘*Ghetto Literacy*.’ I want to use the knowledge I’ve gained and give you something you can use.”

He identified his initial path and embraced a palpable level of charisma at barely three-years-old. At the time, he actually stole his mom’s wedding ring and “*proposed to her friend*.” He laughs, “*I was always confident. I thought she would marry me!*” Between cutting his teeth at talent shows, mom landed in and out of jail for bank robbery and selling drugs. Meanwhile, dad served a life sentence and eventually died behind bars. When his mother returned home, she turned their lives around, finding immense success in real estate and moving Symba to the suburb of Antioch, CA at 10-years-old. “*It was the first time I saw anybody skateboard, tried a salad, or rapped on Cakewalk*,” he remembers. “*Ain’t no game like the suburban game*.”

He simultaneously impressed on the basketball court, while performing in a local group managed by his stepfather. However, the good fortune proved short-lived. His stepdad got caught for real estate fraud, plunging mom’s assets and businesses—four real estate companies, two restaurants, and a sports store—into the hole.

“This was the first time I got to really learn what family meant,” he goes on. “We started communicating, talking, having dinners, and sitting at the table together. It gave me a sense of who I am and where I come from. My taught me how to be a hustler, not just in the streets, but in whatever I was doing—playing basketball or writing songs. I invested in myself and bought a laptop to make music.”

Inspired by everyone from JAY-Z to Steve Stoute and Steve Jobs, he dove headfirst into the rap game. After a series of collaborations with Young Curt took off in the Bay, he headlined early Los Angeles shows on bills with the likes of YG, Tyga, and DJ Mustard as early as 2010. He sold weed to keep afloat as he continued recording. Eventually, friend and producer Nic Nac [Chris Brown, Kevin Gates] encouraged Symba to move down to L.A. Upon arriving in the City of Angels, he turned heads with the *2 More Words* mixtape in 2015, boasting collaborations with the likes of Marc E. Bassy and IamSu!. In addition to praise from *XXL*, *Hypebeast* dubbed it, “*a fiery collection of songs balancing club-ready hooks with deft, incisive narratives*.” His grind paid off, and he inked a deal with Columbia Records in 2017. However, he parted ways with the label after one release. A meeting with producer Cas inspired the next move.

“I had tried to do some other things, but I realized I just needed to rap,” he admits. “I learned how to be a conversational rapper and really say something. Cas asked me what I was. I was finally able to say, ‘*I’m a rapper*.’”

Early demos caught the attention of Atlantic Records who signed him during 2019. Now, his single "Serve" chronicles a key moment. Over a throwback bass line and guitar buzz, he recalls his first experiences trapping taught by his uncle and outlined in vivid verses. He raps, "*My mamma wanna know where I'm getting this cake, I told her, 'Momma don't worry, 'cause your bills ain't late',*" and "*I should be washed in water, I served a lady with a infant daughter. I don't know why I do what I do, yes I do, I do it for dollars.*"

"It's a hustling song," he explains. "I'm telling the story with my uncle. For him, he knew there was one way to get it; that was to serve. *The Lion King* was my favorite movie as a kid. The story ties into mine. My dad died, and I got game from my uncle. He took me in as his own. It's a little bit about that too."

Elsewhere, he drops fiery bars through heartbreaking storytelling on "Trapped."

"I'm basically addressing the way Nipsey Hussle died," he states. "He died in the parking lot of his business in a gang killing. He did all of these things for the community and gave back, but he was still basically trapped. It's the cycle in the ghetto. What's going on?"

Both songs set the stage for his debut *Don't Run From R.A.P.* It ultimately represents the moment Symba fulfills his destiny to the fullest.

"To me, *R.A.P.* stands for '*Responsibilities and Principles*,'" he leaves off. "Don't run from yourself and who you truly are. I ran away from rap before, but I never will again. When people listen to me, I want them to find themselves and embrace who they are. Be yourself. I'm speaking for the people."