

BRYSON TILLER

Home to the Cardinals, Wildcats and the annual derby, Kentucky isn't the quintessential hub for R&B and hip-hop talent. Yet, 22-year-old singer/songwriter/rapper, Bryson Tiller, has emerged from the streets of Louisville with his own brand of street soul that musically blends the urgency of trap music with the smoother sound of alternative R&B. Reared on the slow jams of 112, Dru Hill, Chris Brown and Omarion, Tiller realized his talent as a teen, serenading his female classmates and eventually creating his first recordings at a friend's makeshift studio.

"I went over to my homie's house to record this song that he wanted to feature me on, and next thing you know, everyone at school was talking about it. We received both positive and negative feedback for the song, and that only made me want to get back in the studio and get better."

Raised by his grandmother after his mother passed away when he was four years old, Tiller did little else than stay home, play video games and write music. After borrowing 600 dollars from a friend, he copped a mic, an interface, mic stand, filter and a laptop to piece together his own material. Visions of Soulja Boy's Internet success danced in the back of his mind as he grabbed industry beats from YouTube and free downloadable tracks from SoundClick (an e-community reminiscent of the early music MySpace) and hummed melodies into the mic before uploading them on SoundCloud. Finally, the shy introvert found his outlet.

"I'm not very expressive in relationships and just in day-to-day talking to people," admits Tiller. "So I use my songs to express myself and really get my point across."

His messages on wax don't require rocket science to understand. Whether creating a scarecrow for gold diggers with the *Street Fighter*-sampled "Sorry Not Sorry" or talking that talk in bars on "Don't Worry / Molly," Tiller's narratives are transparent and highly relevant for young Millennials on a mission in either life or love. Throw in 808s and Tiller will deliver what he calls "trap soul."

"It's just trap and hip hop-influenced R&B, the perfect marriage between hip hop and R&B" he says of his go-to formula for songs.

On October 9, 2014, Tiller released his biggest track to date, a self-reflective slow burner entitled "Don't," which has garnered over 22 million listens on SoundCloud, an Instagram shout

out from super-producer Timbaland and a direct message on Twitter from Drake, one of Tiller's biggest musical influences. Self-recorded and mixed in his modest Louisville living room studio, the online success of "Don't" came as a surprise to the young artist and indirectly confirmed Tiller's life goals: make music that resonates.

With his ability to switch up from soft and tender R&B to braggadocious rap effortlessly, Tiller has earned the nickname Pen Griffey, a baseball influenced moniker that speaks not only to his proficiency as a songwriter, but to his roots in Louisville - home of the famous Louisville Slugger bat. A self-proclaimed "culture nerd," Bryson also cites video games, comic books, indie films and Japanese anime as inspirations for his unique style. But he's quick to tell you that he's a self-made man. "I do everything myself," he says of recording his forthcoming album.

Though mapping out five-year plans isn't his style, the father of a two-year-old daughter who juggled part-time gigs for UPS, Papa John's and a moving company barely a year ago to make ends meet is now realizing how drastically his life has changed.

"I read an article in *Forbes* entitled 'Six Ways To Achieve Any Goal' and it really inspired me and helped me get to where I am today."

The *Forbes* piece outlined effective ways for readers to set and achieve life goals, stressing long term vision-planning and the concept of making an overall commitment to one's self.

"It's been a year and some change since I read that article. Now everything is completely different – but I'm still not satisfied. I'm very grateful, but I have a new set of goals that I'm trying to accomplish by this time next year."

Bryson Tiller's debut project *TRAPSOUL* is set to be released on October 2nd.