



Lauryn Hill

For other uses, see [Lauren Hill](#).

Lauryn Noelle Hill (born May 26, 1975) is an American singer, songwriter, rapper, record producer, and actress. She is best known for being a member of the [Fugees](#) and for her critically acclaimed solo album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, which won numerous awards and broke several sales records.

Raised mostly in South Orange, New Jersey, Hill began singing with her music-oriented family during her childhood. She enjoyed success as an actress at an early age, with her older brother Graham Hill, appearing in a recurring role on the television soap opera *As the World Turns* and starring in the 1993 film *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit*. In high school, Hill was approached by Pras Michel to start a band, which his cousin, Wyclef Jean, soon joined. They renamed themselves the Fugees and released the albums *Blunted on Reality* (1994) and the Grammy Award-winning *The Score* (1996). In the latter record, which sold six million copies in the United States, Hill rose to prominence with her African-American and Caribbean music influences, her rapping and singing, and her rendition of the hit "Killing Me Softly". Hill's tumultuous romantic relationship with Jean led to the split of the band in 1997, after which she began to focus on solo projects.

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill (1998) remains Hill's only solo studio album. It received massive critical acclaim, showcasing a representation of life and relationships and locating a contemporary womanist voice within the neo soul genre. The album debuted at number one on the U.S. *Billboard* 200 and has sold approximately eight million copies there. It included the singles "Doo Wop (That Thing)" (also a number one), "Ex-Factor" (became her biggest solo hit in UK), and "Everything Is Everything". At the 41st Grammy Awards, the record earned her five awards, including Album of the Year and Best New Artist. During this time she won numerous other awards and became a common sight on the cover of magazines.

Soon afterward, Hill dropped out of the public eye, dissatisfied with the music industry and suffering with the pressures of fame. Her last full-length recording, the new-material live album *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0* (2002), sharply divided critics and sold poorly compared to her first album and work with the Fugees. Hill's subsequent activity, which includes the release of a few songs and occasional festival appearances, has been sporadic and er-

atic. Her behavior has sometimes caused audience dissatisfaction; a reunion with her former group did not last long. Her music, as well as a series of public statements she has issued, has become critical of pop culture and societal institutions. Hill has six children, five of whom are with [Rohan Marley](#), son of reggae legend [Bob Marley](#). In 2012, she pleaded guilty to tax evasion for failure to pay federal income taxes, and in 2013, served a three-month prison sentence.

1 Life and career

1.1 1975–93: Early life and career beginnings

Lauryn Noelle Hill was born on May 26, 1975,^[2] in East Orange, New Jersey^[1] to English teacher Valerie Hill and computer and management consultant Mal Hill. She has one older brother named Malaney (born 1972).^{[3][4][5]} Her Baptist^[6] family moved to New York and Newark for short periods until settling in South Orange, New Jersey.^[1] She had a middle-class upbringing, knowing both many white Jewish families and many black ones.^{[1][5]} Future actor [Zach Braff](#) lived in the neighborhood, and she attended his Bar Mitzvah.^[7]

Hill has said of her musically oriented family: "there were so many records, so much music constantly being played. My mother played piano, my father sang, and we were always surrounded in music."^[1] Her father sang in local nightclubs and at weddings.^{[8][9]} While growing up, Hill frequently listened to [Curtis Mayfield](#), [Stevie Wonder](#), [Aretha Franklin](#), and [Gladys Knight](#);^[10] years later she recalled playing [Marvin Gaye's](#) *What's Going On* repeatedly until she fell asleep to it.^[1]

In middle school, Hill performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" before a basketball game. Due to its popularity, subsequent games featured a recording of her rendition.^[3] In 1988, Hill appeared as an Amateur Night contestant on *It's Showtime at the Apollo*. She sang her own version of the [Smokey Robinson](#) track "Who's Lovin' You?", garnering an initially harsh reaction from the crowd. She persevered, though she later cried off-stage.^[11]

Hill attended [Columbia High School](#), where she was a member of the track team, a cheerleader^{[3][4]} and was a classmate of [Zach Braff](#).^[7] She also took violin lessons, went to dance class, and founded the school's gospel choir.^[9] Academically, she took advanced placement

classes^[9] and received primarily 'A' grades.^[4] School officials recognized her as a leader among the student body.^[9] Later recalling her education, Hill commented, "I had a love for – I don't know if it was necessarily for academics, more than it just was for achieving, period. If it was academics, if it was sports, if it was music, if it was dance, whatever it was, I was always driven to do a lot in whatever field or whatever area I was focusing on at the moment."^[11]

While a freshman in high school,^[5] through mutual friends, Prakazrel "Pras" Michel approached Hill about a music group he was creating.^{[10][12]} Hill and Pras began under the name Tranzlator Crew, chosen because they wanted to rhyme in different languages.^[10] Another female vocalist was soon replaced by Michel's cousin, multi-instrumentalist Wyclef Jean.^[10] The group began performing in local showcases and high school talent shows.^[5] Hill was initially only a singer, but then learned to rap too; instead of modeling herself on female rappers like Salt-n-Pepa and MC Lyte, she preferred male rappers like Ice Cube and developed her flow from listening to them.^[8] Hill later said, "I remember doing my homework in the bathroom stalls of hip-hop clubs."^[13]

Hill took acting lessons in Manhattan while growing up.^[9] She began her acting career in 1991, appearing with Jean in *Club XII*, MC Lyte's Off-Broadway hip-hop rendering of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.^[5] While the play was not a success, an agent noticed her. Later that year, Hill began appearing on the soap opera *As the World Turns* in a recurring role as troubled teenager Kira Johnson.^{[3][13][14]} She subsequently co-starred alongside Whoopi Goldberg in the 1993 release *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit*, playing Rita Louise Watson, an inner-city Catholic school teenager with a surly, rebellious attitude.^{[3][5]} In it, she performed the songs "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" (a duet with Tanya Blount) and "Joyful, Joyful".^[15] Director Bill Duke credited Hill with improvising a rap in a scene: "None of that was scripted. That was all Lauryn. She was amazing."^[3] Critic Roger Ebert called her "the girl with the big joyful voice", although he thought her talent was wasted,^[16] while *Rolling Stone* said she "performed marvelously against type ... in the otherwise perfunctory [film]."^[5] Hill also appeared in Steven Soderbergh's 1993 motion picture *King of the Hill*, in a minor but pivotal role as a 1930s gum-popping elevator operator. Soderbergh biographer Jason Wood described her as supplying one of the warmest scenes in the film.^[17] Hill graduated from Columbia High School in 1993.

1.2 1994–96: The Fugees

Main article: *The Fugees*

Pras, Hill and Jean renamed their group the Fugees, a derivative of the word "refugee", which was a derogatory term for Haitian Americans.^[5] Hill began a romantic re-

lationship with Jean.^[12] The Fugees, who signed a contract with Columbia/Ruffhouse Records in 1993,^[13] became known for their genre blending, particularly of reggae, rock and soul,^[10] which was first experimented on their debut album, *Blunted on Reality*, released in 1994. It reached number 62 on the *Billboard* Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart^[18] but overall sold poorly.^{[3][13]} and was met by poor critical notices due to being a (management-forced) attempt at gangsta rap attitudes.^[5] Although the album made little impact, Hill's rapping on "Some Seek Stardom" was seen as a highlight.^[19] Within the group, she was frequently referred to by the nickname "L. Boogie".^[20] Hill's image and artistry, as well as her full, rich, raspy alto voice, placed her at the forefront of the band, with some fans urging her to begin a solo career.^{[5][19]}

The Fugees' second album, *The Score* (1996), peaked at number one on the U.S. *Billboard* 200^[21] and stayed in the top ten of that chart for over half a year.^[5] It sold about six million copies in the United States^[22] and more than 17 million copies worldwide.^[9] In the 1996 Pazz & Jop Critics Poll, *The Score* came second in the list of best albums and three of its tracks placed within the top twenty best singles.^[23] It won the Grammy Award for Best Rap Album,^[24] and was later included on *Rolling Stone's* list of the 500 greatest albums of all time.^[25] Almost all of the writing and producing for it was done by Jean.^[5] *The Score* garnered praise for being a strong alternative to the gangsta idiom, and Hill stated, "We're trying to do something positive with the music because it seems like only the negative is rising to the top these days. It only takes a drop of purity to clean a cesspool."^[8]

Singles from *The Score* included "Fu-Gee-La" and "Ready or Not", which highlighted Hill's singing and rapping abilities,^[26] and "No Woman, No Cry". Her rendition of "Killing Me Softly" became her breakout hit.^[27] Buttressed by what *Rolling Stone* publications later called Hill's "evocative" vocal line^[10] and her "amazing pipes",^[25] the track became pervasive on pop, R&B, hip hop, and adult contemporary radio formats.^[10] It won the Grammy Award for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals.^{[24][28]} On the album, Hill combined African-American music and Caribbean music influences with socially conscious lyrics.^[26] *Newsweek* mentioned Hill's "irresistibly cute looks" and proclaimed her "the most powerful new voice in rap."^[8]

At 21 years old, the now-famous Hill was still living at home with her parents.^[5] She had been enrolled at Columbia University during this period, and considered majoring in history as she became a sophomore,^{[5][8]} but left after about a year of total studies once sales of *The Score* went into the millions.^[3] In 1996, Hill responded to a false rumor on *The Howard Stern Show* that she had made a racist comment on MTV, saying "How can I possibly be a racist? My music is universal music. And I believe in God. If I believe in God, then I have to love all of God's creations. There can be no segregation."^{[13][29]}

In 1996, Hill founded the Refugee Project, a non-profit outreach organization that sought to transform the attitudes and behavior of at-risk urban youth.^[30] Part of this was Camp Hill, which offered stays in the Catskill Mountains for such youngsters; another was production of an annual Halloween haunted house in East Orange.^[30] Hill also raised money for Haitian refugees, supported clean water well-building projects in Kenya and Uganda, and staged a rap concert in Harlem to promote voter registration. A 1997 benefit event for the Refugee Project introduced a Board of Trustees for the organization that included Sean Combs, Mariah Carey, Busta Rhymes, Spike Lee, and others as members.^[31]

In 1997, the Fugees split to work on solo projects,^[32] which Jean later blamed on his tumultuous relationship with Hill and the fact he married his wife Claudinette while still involved with Hill.^{[32][33]} Meanwhile, in the summer of 1996 Hill had met Rohan Marley, a son of the late reggae legend Bob Marley and a former University of Miami football player.^[11] Hill subsequently began a relationship with him, while still also involved with Jean.^[11] Hill became pregnant, and in August 1997, Marley and Hill's first child, Zion David, was born.^[6] The couple lived in Hill's childhood house in South Orange after she bought her parents a new house down the street.^[13]

Hill had a cameo appearance in the 1997 film *Hav Plenty*. In 1998, Hill took up another small but important role in the film *Restaurant*;^[34] *Entertainment Weekly* praised her portrayal of the protagonist's pregnant former girlfriend as bringing vigor to the film.^[35]

1.3 1997–99: The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill

“It’s funny how money change a situation.”

—The opening line of “Lost Ones”, the first song on *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*.

Hill recorded her solo record *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* from late 1997 through June 1998 at Tuff Gong Studios in Jamaica.^{[21][29]} The title was inspired by the book *The Mis-Education of the Negro* by Carter G. Woodson and *The Education of Sonny Carson*, a film and autobiographical novel.^[36] The album featured contributions from D’Angelo, Carlos Santana, Mary J. Blige and the then-unknown John Legend.^[37] Wyclef Jean initially did not support Hill recording a solo album, but eventually offered his production help; Hill turned him down.^[11] Several songs on the album concerned her frustration with the Fugees; “I Used to Love Him” dealt with the breakdown of the relationship between Hill and Wyclef Jean.^[36] Other songs such as “To Zion” spoke about her decision to have her first baby, even though many at the time encouraged her to have an abortion so to not interfere with her blossoming career.^{[13][36]} Indeed, Hill’s pregnancy revived her from a period of writer’s block.^[29]

In terms of production, Hill collaborated with a group of musicians known as New Ark, consisting of Vada Nobles, Rasheem Pugh, Tejumold Newton, and Johari Newton.^[36] Hill later said that she wanted to “write songs that lyrically move me and have the integrity of reggae and the knock of hip-hop and the instrumentation of classic soul” and that the production on the album was intended to make the music sound raw and not computer-aided.^[36] Hill spoke of pressure from her label to emulate Prince, wherein all tracks would be credited as written and produced by the artist with little outside help.^[36] She also wanted to be appreciated as an auteur as much as Jean had within the Fugees.^[11] (She also saw a feminist cause: “But step out and try and control things and there are doubts. This is a very sexist industry. They’ll never throw the ‘genius’ title to a sister.”^[26]) While recording the album, when Hill was asked about providing contracts or documentation to the musicians, she replied, “We all love each other. This ain’t about documents. This is blessed.”^[11]

Released on August 25, 1998, the album received rave reviews from contemporary music critics,^[38] and was the most acclaimed album of 1998.^[39] Critics lauded the album’s blending of the R&B, doo-wop, pop, hip-hop, and reggae genres^[13] and its honest representation of a woman’s life and relationships.^[39] David Browne, writing in *Entertainment Weekly*, called it “an album of often-astonishing power, strength, and feeling”, and praised Hill for “easily flowing from singing to rapping, evoking the past while forging a future of her own”.^[40] Robert Christgau quipped, “PC record of the year—songs soft, singing ordinary, rapping skilled, rhymes up and down, skits de trop, production subtle and terrific”.^[41]

It sold over 423,000 copies in its first week (boosted by advance radio play of two non-label-sanctioned singles, “Lost Ones” and “Can’t Take My Eyes Off You”)^[42] and topped the *Billboard* 200 for four weeks and the *Billboard* R&B Albums chart for six weeks. It went on to sell about 8 million copies in the U.S.^[22] and 12 million copies worldwide.^{[11][43][44]} During 1998 and 1999, Hill earned \$25 million from record sales and touring.^[11] Hill, along with Blige, Missy Elliott, Meshell Ndegeocello, Erykah Badu, and others, found a feminist voice with the neo soul genre.^[45]

The first single released from the album was “Lost Ones”, which reached number 27 in Spring 1998.^[46] The second was “Doo Wop (That Thing)”, which debuted at number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.^[46] It exemplified Hill’s appeal, combining feelings of self-empowerment with self-defense.^[45] Other charted singles from the album were “Ex-Factor”, “Everything Is Everything” and “To Zion”.^[46] In the 1998 *Pazz & Jop* Critics Poll, *Miseducation* came second in the list of best albums and “Doo Wop (That Thing)” second in best singles.^[47]

In November 1998, Marley and Hill’s second child, Selah Louise, was born.^{[41][48]} Of being a young mother of two,

Hill said, "It's not an easy situation at all. You have to really pray and be honest with yourself."^[13]



A tradigital art representation, by artist boki.b, of Hill in her late 1990s appearance

In the run-up to the 1999 Grammy Awards, Hill became the first woman to be nominated in ten categories in a single year. In addition to *Miseducation* works, the nominations included her rendition of "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" for the 1997 film *Conspiracy Theory*, which had appeared on *Billboard* charts,^[49] and Hill's writing and producing of "A Rose Is Still a Rose", which became a late-in-career hit for Aretha Franklin.^[50] She appeared on several magazine covers, including *Time*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, *Teen People* and *The New York Times Fashion Magazine*.^[26] During the ceremony, Hill broke another record by becoming the first woman to win five times in one night,^[26] taking home the awards for Album of the Year, Best R&B Album, Best R&B Song, Best Female R&B Vocal Performance, and Best New Artist.^[51] During an acceptance speech, she said, "This is crazy. This is hip-hop!"^[26] Hill had brought forth a new, mainstream acceptance of the genre.^{[9][26]}

In February 1999, Hill received four awards at the 30th Annual NAACP Image Awards.^[52] In May 1999, she became the youngest woman ever named to *Ebony* magazine's 100+ Most Influential Black Americans list;^[53] in November of that year, the same publication named her as one of "10 For Tomorrow" in the "Ebony 2000: Special Millennium Issue".^[54] In May 1999, she made *People* magazine's 50 Most Beautiful People list.^[4] The publication, which has called her "model-gorgeous",^[20]

praised the 5-foot-4-inch (1.63 m) Hill for her idiosyncratic sense of personal style.^[4] In June 1999, she received an *Essence Award*, but her acceptance speech, where she said there was no contradiction in religious love and servitude and "[being] who you are, as fly and as hot and as whatever,"^[55] drew reaction from those in the public who thought she was not a good role model as a young, unwed mother of two.^[56] This was a repetition of criticism she had received after the birth of her first child, and she had said that she and Marley would soon be married.^[13] In early 2000, Hill was one of many artists and producers to share the Grammy Award for Album of the Year for Santana's 1999 multi-million selling *Supernatural*, which she had written, produced, and rapped on the track "Do You Like the Way" for (a rumination on the direction the world was headed, it also featured the singing of CeeLo Green and the signature guitar runs of Carlos Santana). She was also nominated for Best R&B Song for "All That I Can Say", which she had written and produced for Mary J. Blige. Also, her concocted duet with Bob Marley on "Turn Your Lights Down Low" for the 1999 remix tribute album *Chant Down Babylon* additionally appeared in the 1999 film *The Best Man* and later received a Grammy nomination for Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals.

In November 1998, New Ark filed a fifty-page lawsuit against Hill, her management, also her record label, claiming that Hill "used their songs and production skills, but failed to properly credit them for the work" on *Miseducation*.^[57] The musicians claimed to be the primary songwriters on two tracks, and major contributors on several others, though Gordon Williams, a prominent recorder, engineer, and mixer on *Miseducation*, described the album as a "powerfully personal effort by Hill" and said "It was definitely her vision."^[39] Hill responded that New Ark had been appropriately credited and now were seeking to take advantage of her success.^[57] New Ark requested partial writing credits on most of the tracks on the album as well as monetary reimbursement.^[58] After many delays, depositions took place during the latter part of 2000.^{[57][58]} In part, the case illustrated the difficult boundaries between songwriting and all other aspects that went into contemporary arranging, sampling, and recording.^[57] The suit would eventually be settled out of court in February 2001, with Hill paying New Ark a reported \$5 million.^[36] A friend of Hill's later said of the suit, "That was the beginning of a chain effect that would turn everything a little crazy."^[11]

1.4 2000–03: Self-imposed exile and *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0*

Hill began writing a screenplay about the life of Bob Marley, in which she planned to act as his wife Rita.^[11] She also began producing a romantic comedy about soul food with a working title of *Sauce*, and accepted a starring role in the film adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel

Beloved;^[11] she later dropped out of both projects due to pregnancy.^[11] She also reportedly turned down roles in *Charlie's Angels* (the part that went to Lucy Liu), *The Bourne Identity*, *The Mexican*, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*.^[11]

During 2000, Hill dropped out of the public eye. The pressures of fame began to overwhelm her.^{[11][20]} She disliked not being able to go out of her house to do simple errands without having to worry about her physical appearance.^{[11][36]} She fired her management team and began attending Bible study classes five days a week; she also stopped doing interviews, watching television and listening to music.^[36] She started associating with a “spiritual advisor” named Brother Anthony.^[11] Some familiar with Hill believe Anthony more resembled a cult leader than a spiritual advisor,^{[11][59]} and thought his guidance probably inspired much of Hill’s more controversial public behavior.^[59]

She later described this period of her life to *Essence* saying “People need to understand that the Lauryn Hill they were exposed to in the beginning was all that was allowed in that arena at that time. . . I had to step away when I realized that for the sake of the machine, I was being way too compromised. I felt uncomfortable about having to smile in someone’s face when I really didn’t like them or even know them well enough to like them.”^[60] She also spoke about her emotional crisis, saying, “For two or three years I was away from all social interaction. It was a very introspective time because I had to confront my fears and master every demonic thought about inferiority, about insecurity or the fear of being black, young and gifted in this western culture.”^[60] She went on to say that she had to fight to retain her identity, and was forced “to deal with folks who weren’t happy about that.”^[60]

In July 2001, while pregnant with her third child, Hill unveiled her new material to a small crowd, for a taping of an *MTV Unplugged* special.^{[11][61]} An album of the concert, titled *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0*, was released in May 2002 and featured only her singing and playing an acoustic guitar.^[61] Unlike the near-unanimous praise of *Miseducation, 2.0* sharply divided critics. *AllMusic* gave the album 4 out of 5 stars, saying that the recording “is the unfinished, unflinching presentation of ideas and of a person. It may not be a proper follow-up to her first album, but it is fascinating.”^[62] *Rolling Stone* called the album “a public breakdown”^[11] and Robert Hilburn of the *Los Angeles Times* said the album’s title opened Hill up for jokes that she had become unhinged.^[63] *NME* wrote that “*Unplugged 2.0* is a sparse and often gruelling listen, but there is enough genius shading these rough sketches to suggest that all might not yet be lost.” With the mixed reviews and no significant radio airplay, *2.0* debuted at number three on the *Billboard* 200,^[64] but then quickly fell down the charts^[63] and ended up selling less than 500,000 copies in the U.S.^[11] Neither the album nor its songs placed in the 2002 *Pazz & Jop Critics Poll*.^[65] Her song “Mystery of Iniquity” was nominated for a *Grammy Award*

for Best Female Rap Solo Performance^[66] and used as an interpolation by hip-hop producer/songwriter Kanye West for his single “All Falls Down”, as sung by Syleena Johnson.^[67]

Around 2001, Marley and Hill’s third child, Joshua Omaru, was born.^[48] He was followed a year later by their fourth, John Nesta.^[48] While Hill sometimes had spoken of Marley as her husband, they never married, and along the way she was informed that Marley had been previously married at a young age.^[11] Furthermore, according to a 2003 *Rolling Stone* report, he had never secured a divorce;^[11] but Marley later disputed this and made public to a blog a 1996 divorce document from Haiti.^[68] The two had been living in a high-end Miami hotel, but around 2003 she moved out into her own place in that city.^[11] Hill later said that she and Marley “have had long periods of separation over the years”.^[69] Hill slowly worked on a new album and it was reported that by 2003, *Columbia Records* had spent more than \$2.5 million funding it, including installing a recording studio in the singer’s Miami apartment and flying different musicians around the country.^[11]

By 2002, Hill had shut down her non-profit Refugee Project.^[70] She said, “I had a nonprofit organization and I had to shut all that down. You know, smiling with big checks, obligatory things, not having things come from a place of passion. That’s slavery. Everything we do should be a result of our gratitude for what God has done for us. It should be passionate.”^[70]

In December 2003, Hill, during a performance in Vatican City, spoke of the “corruption, exploitation, and abuses” in reference to the molestation of boys by Catholic priests in the United States and the cover-up of offenses by Catholic Church officials.^[71] High-ranking church officials were in attendance, but Pope John Paul II was not present.^[71] The Catholic League called Hill “pathologically miserable” and claimed her career was “in decline”.^[72] The following day, several reporters suggested that Hill’s comments at the Vatican may have been influenced by her spiritual advisor, Brother Anthony.^[59]

1.5 2004–09: Sporadic touring and recording

In 2004, Hill contributed a new song, “The Passion”, to *The Passion of the Christ: Songs*. A remix version with John Legend of his “So High” ended up receiving a *Grammy Award* nomination for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals. Around this time, Hill began selling a pay-per-view music video of the song “Social Drugs” through her website.^[73] Those who purchase the \$15 video would only be able to view it three times before it expired. In addition to the video, Hill began selling autographed posters and Polaroids through her website, with some items listed at upwards of \$500.^[73]

For the first time since 1997, the Fugees performed in



Hill performing in Central Park, New York, 2005

September 2004 at *Dave Chappelle's Block Party* in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn. The concert featured Hill's nearly a cappella rendition of "Killing Me Softly". The event was recorded by director Michel Gondry and was released on March 3, 2006, to universal acclaim.^[74] The Fugees also appeared at BET Awards 2005 during June 2005, where they opened the show with a 12-minute set. One track, "Take It Easy", was leaked online and thereafter was released as an Internet single in late September. It peaked at number forty on the *Billboard* R&B Chart.^[75] In 2005, she told *USA Today*, "If I make music now, it will only be to provide information to my own children. If other people benefit from it, then so be it."^[76] When asked how she now felt about the songs on *2.0*, she stated "a lot of the songs were transitional. The music was about how I was feeling at the time, even though I was documenting my distress as well as my bursts of joy."^[76]

The Fugees embarked on a European tour in late 2005.^[77] Old tensions between Hill and the other members of the group soon resurfaced, and the reunion ended before an album could be recorded; Jean and Michel both blamed Hill for the split.^[20] Hill reportedly demanded to be addressed by everyone, including her bandmates, as "Ms. Hill"; she also considered changing her moniker to "Empress".^[20] Hill's tardiness was also cited as a contributing factor.^[20]

Hill began touring on her own, although to mixed reviews; often arriving late to concerts (sometimes by over two hours), performing unpopular reconfigurations of her songs and sporting an exaggerated appearance.^{[20][78]} On some occasions, fans have booed her and left early.^[79] In



Lauryn Hill performing in Brazil in 2007

June 2007, Sony Records said Hill had been recording through the past decade, had accumulated considerable unreleased material and had re-entered the studio with the goal of making a new album.^[80] Later that same year, an album titled *Ms. Hill*, which featured cuts from *Miseducation*, various soundtracks contributions and other "unreleased" songs, was released. It features guest appearances from D'Angelo, Rah Digga and John Forté.^[81] Also in June 2007, Hill released a new song, "Lose Myself", on the soundtrack to the film *Surf's Up*.^[82]

In early 2008, Marley and Hill's fifth child, Sarah, was born.^{[20][48]} The couple was not living together, although Marley considered them "spiritually together" even while listing himself as single on social media.^[20] Hill later said that she and Marley "have [had] a long and complex history about which many inaccuracies have been reported since the beginning" and that they both valued their privacy.^[69] By August 2008, Hill was living with her mother and children in her hometown of South Orange, New Jersey.^[20]

Reports in mid-2008 claimed that Columbia Records then believed Hill to be on hiatus.^[20] Marley disputed these claims, telling an interviewer that Hill has enough material for several albums: "She writes music in the bathroom, on toilet paper, on the wall. She writes it in the mirror if the mirror smokes up. She writes constantly. This woman does not sleep."^[79] One of the few public

appearances Hill made in 2008 was at a *Martha Stewart* book-signing in New Jersey, perplexing some in the press.^[83] In April 2009, it was reported that Hill would engage in a 10-day tour of European summer festivals during mid-July of that year. She performed two shows for the tour and passed out on stage during the start of her second performance and left the stage. She refused to give refunds to angry consumers for the show.^[84] On June 10, Hill's management informed the promoters of the *Stockholm Jazz Festival*, which she was scheduled to headline, that she would not be performing due to unspecified "health reasons."^[84] Shortly afterward, the rest of the tour was canceled as well.^[84]

1.6 2010–present: Further activities and imprisonment

In January 2010, Hill returned to the live stage and performed in stops across New Zealand and Australia on the *Raggamuffin Music Festival*.^[85] Many of the songs that Hill had performed and recorded over the past six years were included on an April 2010 unofficial compilation album titled *Khulami Phase*.^[86] The album also features a range of other material found on the *Ms. Hill* compilation.^[86] Hill appeared at the *Harmony Festival* in *Santa Rosa, California*, in June 2010, her first live American performance in several years.^[87] An unreleased song called "Repercussions" was leaked via the Internet in late July 2010, debuting at number 94 on *Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs* (and peaked at number 83 the following week), making it her first *Billboard* chart appearance as a lead artist since 1999.^[88]



Hill and her backing musicians performing at *Coachella Valley Music Festival* in California in 2011

Hill joined the *Rock the Bells* hip-hop festival series in the U.S. during August 2010, and as part of that year's theme of rendering classic albums, she performed *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* in its entirety for the first time.^[89] She increased the tempo and urgency from the original recording, but at times had difficulty in communicating with her band.^[89] Hill continued touring, in-

cluding a set at the 6th Annual *Jazz in the Gardens*, in *Miami Gardens, Florida* in December.^[90] In Spring 2011, Hill performed at the *Coachella Valley Music Festival*,^[91] *New Orleans Jazz Fest*,^[92] and at *The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas*.^[93] In July 2011, Hill gave birth to her sixth child, Micah, her first not with Rohan Marley; the father remains publicly unknown.^[69]

In February 2012, Hill performed a new song titled "Fearless Vampire Killer", during a sold-out performance at the *Warner Theater* in Washington, D.C.^[94] In late 2012, Hill toured with rapper *Nas*; her portion of the tour, titled *Black Rage*, is named after her song, released October 30.^[95] Hill has described the song as being "about the derivative effects of racial inequity and abuse" and "a juxtaposition to the statement 'life is good,' which she believes can only be so when these long standing issues are addressed and resolved."^[96]

In June 2012, Hill was charged with three counts of tax fraud or failing to file taxes (Title 26 USC § 7202 Willful failure to collect or pay over tax) not tax evasion on \$1.8 million of income earned between 2005 and 2007.^[97] During this time she had toured as a musical artist, earned royalties from both her records and from films she had appeared in, and had owned and been in charge of multiple corporations.^[98] In a long post to her *Tumblr*, Hill said that she had gone "underground" and had rejected pop culture's "climate of hostility, false entitlement, manipulation, racial prejudice, sexism and ageism." She added that, "When I was working consistently without being affected by the interferences mentioned above, I filed and paid my taxes. This only stopped when it was necessary to withdraw from society, in order to guarantee the safety and well-being of myself and my family."^{[99][100]} On June 29, 2012, Hill appeared in the *United States District Court* for the *District of New Jersey* in *Newark* and pleaded guilty to the charges; her attorney said she would make restitution for the back taxes she owed.^[97] By April 22, 2013, Hill had paid back only \$50,000 of the \$554,000 she owed immediately; U.S. Magistrate Judge *Madeline Cox Arleo* criticized Hill, saying "This is not someone who stands before the court penniless. This is a criminal matter. Actions speak louder than words, and there has been no effort here to pay these taxes."^[100] Hill also faced possible eviction from her rented home in *South Orange* as well as a civil lawsuit from the town for running a business out of a home without a zoning permit.^[101]

On May 4, 2013, Hill released her first official single in over a decade, "*Neurotic Society (Compulsory Mix)*".^[102] She later published a message on her *Tumblr* describing how she was "required to release [it] immediately, by virtue of the impending legal deadline."^[102] The release received some criticism for lyrics that appeared to tie societal decay to certain *LGBT* social movements.^[103] Hill responded that the song was not targeted at any particular group but was instead focused on anyone hiding behind neurotic behavior.^[104] Following a deal with *Sony*

Music, which involves Hill creating a new record label within the company, Hill was said to be scheduled to release her first album in fifteen years during 2013.^[102]

On May 6, 2013, Hill was sentenced by Judge Arleo to serve three months in prison for failing to file taxes/tax fraud and three months house arrest afterwards as part of a year of supervised probation.^{[105][106]} She had faced a possible sentence of as long as 36 months,^[100] and the sentence given took into account her lack of a prior criminal record and her six minor-aged children.^{[106][107]} By this point Hill had fully paid back \$970,000 in back taxes and penalties she owed, which also took into account an additional \$500,000 that Hill had in unreported income for 2008 and 2009.^[107] In the courtroom, Hill said that she had lived “very modestly” considering how much money she had made for others,^[106] and that “I am a child of former slaves who had a system imposed on them. I had an economic system imposed on me.”^[105] Hill reported to the minimum-security Federal Correctional Institution, Danbury on July 8, 2013, to begin serving her sentence.^[108]

Hill was released from prison on October 4, 2013, a few days early for good behavior, and began her home confinement and probationary periods.^[109] She put out a single called “Consumerism” that she had finished, via verbal and e-mailed instructions, while incarcerated.^[110] Judge Arleo allowed her to postpone part of her confinement in order to tour in late 2013 under strict conditions.^[111]

During 2014, Hill was heard as the narrator of *Concerning Violence*, an award-winning Swedish documentary on the African liberation struggles of the 1960s and 1970s.^[112] She also continued to draw media attention for her erratic behavior, appearing late twice in the same day for sets at Voodoo Fest in November 2014.^[113]

In May 2015, Hill canceled her scheduled concert outside Tel Aviv in Israel following a social media campaign from activists promoting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign. She said she had wanted to also perform a show in Ramallah in the West Bank but logistical problems had proved too great. Hill stated: “It is very important to me that my presence or message not be misconstrued, or a source of alienation to either my Israeli or my Palestinian fans.”^[114]

Hill contributed her voice to the soundtrack for *What Happened, Miss Simone?*, a 2015 documentary about the life of Nina Simone, an American singer, pianist, and civil rights activist. Hill was originally supposed to record only two songs for the record, but ended up recording six. She also served as a producer on the comp alongside Robert Glasper. Hill said of her connection to Simone: “Because I fed on this music ... I believed I always had a right to have a voice. Her example is clearly a form of sustenance to a generation needing to find theirs. What a gift.”^[115] NPR critically praised Hill’s performance on the soundtrack, stating: “This album mainly showcases Lauryn Hill’s breadth and dexterity. Not formally mar-

keted as Hill’s comeback album, her six tracks here make this her most comprehensive set of studio recordings since *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* in 1998.”^[116]

In April 2016, Hill hosted and headlined what was billed as the inaugural *Diaspora Calling!* festival at the Kings Theatre in Brooklyn.^[117] The festival’s purpose was to showcase the efforts of musicians and artists from around the African diaspora.^[118] But the following month, Hill was approximately 1 hour late (not 2 hours and 20 minutes as previously reported) for her show at the Chastain Park Amphitheatre in Atlanta.^[119] Moments after the less than 90 minute show ended, she said her driver had gotten lost and she could not help that. Less than 48 hours later, after a large backlash from her fans on Twitter, she took to her Facebook page and stated she was late for the concert because of certain needs, including her need to “align her energies.”

2 Discography

Main article: Lauryn Hill discography

- *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (1998)

3 Filmography

4 See also

- List of awards and nominations received by Lauryn Hill

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6 External links

- Official website
- Lauryn Hill at the Internet Movie Database
- Lauryn Hill at MTV

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