

Rihanna



- **Synopsis**

- Born Robyn Rihanna Fenty, on February 20, 1988, in Barbados, Rihanna signed with Def Jam records at age 16 and in 2005 released her first album *Music of the Sun*, which sold more than two million copies worldwide. She went on to release more albums and an array of hit songs, including "Unfaithful," "Umbrella," "Disturbia," "Take a Bow," "Diamonds" and "We Found Love." A global pop star with an unrelentingly edgy image, Rihanna has also won multiple industry accolades, including Grammys and MTV awards.

- **Early Life**

- Singer Robyn Rihanna Fenty was born on February 20, 1988, in St. Michael Parish on the Caribbean island of Barbados. She is the eldest of three children born to Monica Fenty, an accountant, and Ronald Fenty, a warehouse supervisor. Rihanna's childhood was marred by her father's struggles with addictions to alcohol and crack cocaine and her parents' marital problems—they divorced when she was 14 years old
- Rihanna also struggled with crippling headaches for several years during her childhood, a condition she attempted to hide from her friends and classmates so that they would not think she was abnormal. "I never expressed how I felt," she remembered. "I always kept it in. I would go to school ... you would never know there was something wrong with me."

- **Move to U.S.**

- As a teenager, Rihanna turned to singing as a release from her troubles at home. She formed a girl group with two classmates; when they were 15 years old, they scored an audition with music producer Evan Rodgers, who was visiting the island with his Barbadian wife. Rodgers was awed by the precociously beautiful and talented Rihanna, to the unfortunate detriment of her two friends. "The minute Rihanna walked into the room, it was like the other two girls didn't exist," he admitted.
- Less than a year later, when Rihanna was only 16 years old, she left Barbados to move in with Rodgers and his wife in Connecticut and work on recording a demo album. "When I left Barbados, I didn't look back," Rihanna recalled. "I wanted to do what I had to do, even if it meant moving to America."

- **Hit Singles on Def Jam**
- In January 2005, Rogers landed Rihanna as the newly minted president, the legendary she recalled. However, once Rihanna composed her composure. "I remember staring into singing, and at that point, I was fearful. I was like, 'Oh my God, Jay-Z is sitting every bit as wowed by Rihanna's composure years earlier, and he signed her on the spot."
- Only eight months later, in August 2005, she released "Replay," a reggae-influenced club track that topped the chart and announced Rihanna as the new star. Her album, *Music of the Sun*, released later that year, topped the albums chart and also featured the single "Pon de Replay." She released her second album, *A Girl Like Me*, in 2006, which featured the hit "Unfaithful" and "SOS," Rihanna's first



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- **'Good Girl Gone Bad'**

- In 2007, Rihanna effected a transformation from cute teen pop princess to superstar and sex symbol with her third album, *Good Girl Gone Bad*, fueled by its smash hit lead single "Umbrella," featuring Jay-Z. "It shows such growth for her as an artist," Jay-Z said about the track. "If you listen to the lyrics to that song, you know the depth and how far she's come."
- "Umbrella" topped the Billboard singles chart and earned Rihanna her first Grammy Award for Best Rap/Sung Collaboration. The album reached No. 2 on the charts and also featured the singles "Shut Up and Drive" and "Don't Stop the Music," with the latter featuring a sample of Michael Jackson's "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'." *Good Girl Gone Bad: Reloaded*, released the following year, scored further hits in "Disturbia," "Take a Bow" and "Hate That I Love You."
- Continuing her onslaught of hit albums, Rihanna released *Rated R* in 2009 with the singles "Hard" and "Rude Boy." Her 2010 album, *Loud*, was once again a commercial success behind the songs "What's My Name," "Only Girl (In the World)" and "S&M."
- Besides her own laundry list of hit songs, Rihanna is also featured on a host of popular songs by other artists, including Jay-Z's "Run this Town," [Eminem](#)'s "Love the Way You Lie," Maroon 5's "If I Never See Your Face Again" and [Kanye West](#)'s "All of the Lights."
- In 2011, Rihanna released her sixth studio album: *Talk That Talk*. The album included "We Found Love," a track with DJ Calvin Harris that won the 2013 Grammy Award for best short form music video.

- **Tumultuous Personal Life**

- Rihanna has also made headlines in her personal life, although often for circumstances beyond her control. She first made gossip column headlines in 2006 when rumors swirled that she was having an affair with her mentor, Jay-Z. Both she and Jay-Z have always dismissed such allegations as ridiculous. "At first I was like, 'Ha ha, it's funny,'" Rihanna said. "Now I just ignore it and I'm numb to it. You cannot stop people from saying what they want to say."
- In 2009, Rihanna again made headlines again, becoming the center of a media firestorm after a domestic violence incident in which her then-boyfriend [Chris Brown](#) assaulted her before an awards show. The incident sparked a huge public outpouring of support for Rihanna, and she became a spokesperson against domestic violence. "This happened to me," she said in an interview with [Diane Sawyer](#). "It can happen to anyone."

- **'Unapologetic' and 'Anti'**
- On her Grammy-winning 2012 album *Unapologetic*, Rihanna turned out such hits as the No. 1 [Sia Furler](#) tune "Diamonds" and "Stay," featuring Mikky Ekko. (Interestingly, *Unapologetic* was the first Rihanna album to hit No. 1 on the pop charts.) She also worked with Coldplay on the track "Princess of China" and, the following year, reached No. 1 again with another Eminem collaboration, "The Monster." Around this time Rihanna also began to do movie work, co-starring in the sci-fi flick *Battleship* (2012) and later lending her voice to the lead character in the animated blockbuster *Home* (2015).
- Known for her sexually provocative imagery and wild style, Rihanna made headlines for the sheer dress she wore to the Council of Fashion Designers of America awards ceremony in June 2014. She was there to receive the CFDA's Fashion Icon Award and told the crowd that "Fashion has always been my defense mechanism," according to an Associated Press report. Rihanna acknowledged that there were some rules to fashion, but explained that "rules are meant to be broken." Around this time, the singer made a bold professional move as well: She switched from the Def Jam label to Jay-Z's Roc Nation.
- In August 2015, NBC announced that Rihanna would be the key adviser on *The Voice*'s ninth season. That same year she contributed vocals to the single "FourFiveSeconds," a collaboration with West and famed Beatle [Paul McCartney](#), as well as releasing "B**** Better Have My Money," a tune allegedly inspired by court wranglings with her former manager that also featured a highly controversial, violent music video. In 2015, Rihanna also became the first artist in history to have 100 million singles digitally downloaded and streamed.
- In late January 2016, Rihanna released her next album *Anti*, allowing Jay-Z's online streaming site Tidal to exclusively feature the collection of tracks for a week. The gambit paid off for the struggling service, with one million trial subscribers joining Tidal in less than a day to partake in a download promotion for *Anti*. The lead single off the album is "Work," featuring rapper [Drake](#).



