

Talib Kweli & J. Rawls Release *The Confidence Of Knowing* Perform Native Sons On The Tonight Show



Talib Kweli and producer J. Rawls have released their album *The Confidence Of Knowing*, and they performed “Native Sons” on *The Tonight Show*. Fans remember J. Rawls producing “Brown Skin Lady” from Kweli and Yasiin Bey’s 1998 Black Star debut album. Kweli salutes the Native Tongue Movement, advocates for social justice, celebrates the culture, and gets reflective about romantic relationships on TCOK. They have plenty of company with a roster of guests, including Jimetta Rose, Buckshot, Blu, Rasse Kass, Georgia Anne Muldrow, Coast Contra, Skyzoo, and Planet Asia. J. Rawls’ boom bap soul wraps Kweli’s words in future nostalgia. It’s been more than two decades, and Kweli is still concerned with the beauty of the Black underclass, as evidenced in the lyricism of “To the Ghetto.” The critiques of the masses don’t end there, and he calls out performative media activists and the shaming of those who seek social justice on “We Outside.”

Rawls keeps things moving with the bending of soul samples, quaint pianos, and swampy blues licks. The duo unapologetically claim ’90s energy in “Turnstyle,” with remembrances of New York City subways, vinyl scratches, a Biggie sample, and a flatlined vibraphone. The legacy of that era is passed down through Coast Contra on “SWAT.” The group, which is partly comprised of Rasse Kass’s twin sons, joins Kweli on the pure bragging fest. The support for the future of hip-hop is also present on the slinky “Steve Austin,” which has a feature from Kweli’s daughter Diani. *The Confidence Of Knowing* reveals a harmonious musical bond between Rawls and

Kweli and the sentiment of “Sing Into The Sky” that they intend to plan to do hip-hop “until they die.”