

## Rare Portraits

Talib Kweli

Gravitas, light it up  
Lighten it up, brighten it up, yea  
You want the grown step your bars up  
You brag about the scrilla them killas lighten your cars up  
Welcome to the complete history of the one known as Talib Kweli

Such a blessing, I'm making the bread leven  
Descendant of Terra Firma  
I'm from the era of legend  
The blind to my eyesight  
Too scared of the world ending  
My men of spiritual essence be walking right into heaven  
Ascending without the stairs, expressing without the fears  
We diamonds but our minds are corrupted just like De Beers  
Unravelling minds, travelling through time like Standing with the flow like  
the man in the gondolier  
In the park of Washington Square, locks in my hair  
Louder than the bull horns we was locking 'em there  
Cops would prepare to lock us up  
They was scared like tales from the dark side  
Summer of the Central Park five

1989 was the number, the year that I started rhyming  
From Brooklyn to Staten Island them Decepticons was wildin'  
Music soothing but the imagery violent as bomb threats  
Therapy for the prison industrial complex  
Provided the context for the with the tec nine  
At Brooklyn Tech I spit it the best so they had to respect mine  
I did it to death on my grind on a quest to get signed  
Sorta like the tribe would always suggest we check the rhyme  
An internal with Puff Daddy, confronted the Rolling with Hi Tek in the MPV t  
hrough the streets of the Natti  
Before graduating to Caddies was carrying crates  
Shoutout to Flex all day doing records with John Forte  
We was standing outside the tower devouring prey  
Powerful display of bullet points that we shower and spray the block with  
Back in them solid days these rappers was appetizers  
I played it like I was David, I was tackling that Goliath  
Attacking the open mics to the victory was decisive  
This life it was so enticing, my surgery so precise  
I would chop it like thin slices at parties we politic  
At the country club, lighting up dutches with Pac and Big  
At the crib of supernatural battling back and forth  
Back before Jean was in the unsigned hype in the back of The Source  
Rest in peace to sons  
was liking to call you son  
Cause you mine I call you son cause you shine  
What's up [?], this is OG Brooklyn shit  
Not for impostors, pour out a shot of vodka for them  
Big L, Big Poppa, Big Pun, 2Pac  
The jungle is too savage, rap true master producing the new classic  
This shit is too classic it's blow to to spinal tap  
I started with the Rawkus Recording we work the vinyl backwards  
From DEF JUX to Loaded Lux  
I'm the underground king like I'm rolling with Bun and The flow is nuts it's  
solid I got the golden touch  
Plus my iron sheek and I got the game and the cobra clutch

This the highest calibre do the algebra  
From Yasiin Bey to Jean Grey to Pharoahe Monch  
Black Thought to Common  
Almost 20 years after the release of Soundbombing  
And it still sound common  
I'm out and on tour with the greatest, A Tribe Called Quest  
And the De La's, opened for Jay Z and Nas, who else could say this?  
In Vegas with Tech 9 getting faded before the gig  
Only later to hit the RIO and hop on the stage with Prince  
True story, I always knew the importance of great shows  
Since 1992 I seen Ice Cube play Way cold, continue to pave the road for the  
Kendricks and J Coles  
Continue to stake gold  
From making the way for Kanye to meetings with Mr. Harry Belafonte  
All started on park benches with Dante  
Predicting the future, so observant I'm clairvoyant  
The frame can't contain it, I'm painting a rare portrait