



Monica (singer)

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Monica Denise Brown (*née* **Arnold**; born October 24, 1980),^[2] simply known as **Monica**, is an American singer, songwriter, producer, and actress. Born and raised in College Park, Georgia, she began performing as a child and became part of a traveling gospel choir at the age of ten. She rose to prominence after releasing her debut studio album, *Miss Thang*, in 1995. It went multiplatinum, while its first two singles, "Don't Take It Personal" and "Before You Walk Out of My Life", made her the youngest recording act to ever have two consecutive chart-topping hits on the *Billboard* Top R&B Singles chart. In 1998, Monica's second album, *The Boy Is Mine*, earned her major international chart success. Pushed by its Grammy Award-winning number-one hit title track, a duet with singer Brandy, it spawned two further *Billboard* Hot 100 chart-toppers, "The First Night" and "Angel of Mine", and established her position as one of the most successful urban R&B female vocalists to emerge in the mid to late-1990s.^[3]

Monica also ventured into acting, with a supporting role in *Boys and Girls* (2000), and starring roles in television film *Love Song* (2000). During the production of her third album, *All Eyez on Me* (2002), Monica experienced personal struggles and her career went under hiatus.^[4] In 2003, her fourth album, *After the Storm*, was released, and after an unsuccessful period, she scored her fifth number one single on the US R&B/Hip Hop, "So Gone". The album also included her Top 20 *Billboard* Hot 100 hit "U Should've Known Better". Her sixth album, *Still Standing*, which recording was tracked by her BET reality show *Monica: Still Standing*, was released in 2010 and produced the hit single "Everything to Me", which became her sixth number one hit on the US R&B/Hip Hop.^[5]

With a career lasting over 20 years, she became the first artist to top the US *Billboard* Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s.^[6] In 2010, *Billboard* listed Monica at number

Monica



Monica Brown performs songs from *Code Red*

Born	Monica Denise Arnold <div>October 24, 1980^[1]</div> <div>College Park, Georgia, U.S.</div>
Other names	Monica Brown
Occupations	Singer • songwriter • producer • actress
Years active	1995–present
Spouse	 Shannon Brown (m. 2010)
Children	3
Musical career	

24 on its list of the Top 50 R&B and Hip Hop Artists of the past 25 years.^[7]

Genres	R&B · hip hop · hip hop soul
Labels	RCA · J · Arista · Rowdy
Website	www.monica.com (http://www.monica.com)

Early life

Monica was born in College Park, Georgia on October 24, 1980. She is the only daughter of Marilyn Best, a former church singer and [Delta Air Lines](#) customer service representative, and M.C. "Billy" Arnold Jr., a mechanic working for an [Atlanta freight company](#).^[8] She has a younger brother, Montez (born in 1983), half brother Jermond Grant on her father's side,^[9] and two maternal half-brothers, Tron and Cypress.^[10] Monica also is a cousin of record producer [Polow da Don](#),^[11] and relative-in-law to rapper [Ludacris](#) through her mother's second marriage to Reverend Edward Best, a [Methodist minister](#).^[12]

At the age of 2, Monica followed in her mother's footsteps with regular performances at the [Jones Hill Chapel United Methodist Church](#) in Marilyn's hometown [Newnan, Georgia](#).^[12] While growing up in the modest circumstances of a single-parent home after her parents' 1984 separation and 1987 divorce, Monica continued training herself in singing and became a frequent talent-show contestant, winning over 20 local singing competitions throughout her early teenage years.^[10] When she was 10 years old, she became the youngest member of "Charles Thompson and the Majestics", which is a traveling 12-piece gospel choir.^[9] She also attended [North Clayton High School](#) along with rapper [2 Chainz](#).

Career

1991–2000: *Miss Thang* and *The Boy Is Mine*

In 1991, at the age of eleven, Monica was discovered by music producer [Dallas Austin](#) at the Center Stage auditorium in Atlanta performing [Whitney Houston](#) 1986's "[Greatest Love of All](#)". Amazed by her voice, Dallas offered her a record deal with his [Arista Records](#)-distributed label [Rowdy Records](#) and consulted rapper [Queen Latifah](#) to work as Monica's first manager.^[13] Shortly afterwards Dallas and then staff producers [Tim & Bob](#) entered the studio with Monica to start writing and producing her debut *Miss Thang* which was eventually released in July 1995 and scored number thirty-six on the U.S. *Billboard* 200 and number seven on the [Top R&B Albums](#) chart.^[13] It was certified [triple platinum](#) by the [RIAA](#) for more than three million store-shipped copies^[14] and produced three top ten singles, including debut single "[Don't Take It Personal \(Just One of Dem Days\)](#)" and "[Before You Walk Out of My Life](#)", both of which made Monica the youngest artist ever to have two consecutive chart-topping hits on the U.S. *Billboard* Hot R&B Singles chart.^[15] *Miss Thang* subsequently won Monica a [Billboard Music Award](#) and garnered her an [American Music Award](#) nomination in the [Favorite Soul/R&B New Artist](#) category.^[16]

After a label change to [Clive Davis](#)'s [Arista Records](#), Monica mainstream success was boosted, when [Diane Warren](#)-written "[For You I Will](#)", from the *Space Jam* soundtrack, became her next top ten pop hit.^[16] The following year she was asked to team up with singer [Brandy](#) and producer [Rodney "Darkchild" Jerkins](#) to record "[The Boy Is Mine](#)", the first single from both of their second albums. Released in May 1998, surrounding highly publicized rumors about a real-life catfight between both singers,^[17] the duet became both the biggest hit of the summer and the biggest hit of 1998 in general in America,^[18] spending record-breaking thirteen weeks on top of the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart. It earned the pair a [Grammy Award](#) for [Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal](#)" and garnered [multi-platinum](#) sales (to date, it remains as one of the top twenty most successful

American singles in history based on *Billboard* chart success).^[18] Jermaine Dupri, David Foster and Austin consulted on the album *The Boy Is Mine*, which was released later that year and eventually became Monica's biggest-selling album, becoming certified triple platinum by the RIAA for more than three million store-shipped copies.^[14] It yielded another two U.S. number-one hits with "The First Night" and "Angel of Mine", a cover of Eternal's 1997 single, as well as a remake of Richard Marx' "Right Here Waiting". *Rolling Stone* proclaimed it as "closer to soul's source... harking back past hip-hop songbirds like Mary J. Blige and adult-contemporary sirens like Toni Braxton,"^[19] while AllMusic called the album an "irresistible sounding [and] immaculately crafted musical backdrop [...] as good as mainstream urban R&B gets in 1998."^[20] Monica has also made guest appearances on several television shows such as *Living Single* (1996), *Beverly Hills, 90210* (1997, 1999).

2000–2005: *All Eyez on Me* and *After the Storm*

In 2000, Monica made her film debut in the third drama from MTV Films, *Love Song*, as Camille Livingston, a young woman torn between the life her parents have planned for her and the world she experiences after meeting a musician from the wrong side of the tracks. The film debut the song "What My Heart Says" with promotion of her third album *All Eyez on Me* (2002). The film was released on April 30, 2002 and in *Felicity* (2001) and *American Dreams* (2003) playing Mary Wells, singing "My Guy".

In 2000, Monica contributed chorus vocals for "I've Got to Have It", a collaboration with Jermaine Dupri and rapper Nas. Released as the *Big Momma's House* theme song, the song saw minor success in the United States only. The following year, she released the Ric Wake production track "Just Another Girl", recorded for the *Down to Earth* soundtrack, as a single. A year later, Monica channeled much of her heavily media-discussed experiences into the production of her third studio album, *All Eyez on Me*, her first release on mentor Clive Davis newly founded J Records label. "I just wanted to give the people back something that had personal passion, instead of just, 'Oh, let's dance to this record'," she said about the issues worked into the tracks.^[4] The first single "All Eyez on Me," a Rodney Jerkins-produced R&B-dance track, saw minor to moderate success on the international charts but failed to enter the higher half of the U.S. *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.^[4] A follow-up song, "Too Hood", also got a lukewarm response and as a result, the album's tentative release was pushed back several times.^[4] "I don't think people wanted to hear a big fun record from me, after knowing all the things that I had personally experienced," Monica second-guessed her new material which saw both early and heavy bootlegging via internet at that time.^[4]

After the Japan-wide release of *All Eyez on Me*, Monica was asked to substantially reconstruct the record with a host of new producers, and as a result she re-entered recording studios to start work with songwriters Kanye West, Jazze Pha, Andre "mrDEYO" Deyo, Bam & Ryan and Dupri – replacing executive producer Missy Elliott.^[21] Finally released in June 2003, *After the Storm* debuted at number one on *Billboard's* Top R&B/Hip-Hop albums chart, and on top of the official *Billboard* 200, with sales of 186,000 copies emerging as Monica's first and only number-one album to date. It eventually received a gold certification, and has sold over one million copies domestically.^[17] Media reception of the CD was generally enthusiastic, with the Allmusic saying the album "has all the assuredness and smart developments that should keep Monica's younger longtime followers behind her — all the while holding the ability to appeal to a wider spectrum of R&B and hip-hop fans."^[22] The album's lead single, Elliott-penned "So Gone", was one of Monica's biggest commercial successes in years, becoming her first top ten single since 1999's "Angel of Mine". In addition, it reached the top position

of the *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop Tracks and *Hot Dance Club Play* charts.^[23] Subsequently, *After the Storm* spawned another three singles, with final single "U Should've Known Better" reaching number nineteen on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.^[24]

2006–2010: *The Makings of Me*, *Still Standing*, and reality television

Towards the end of 2006, Monica released her next studio album *The Makings of Me*. Titled after Curtis Mayfield's recording "The Makings of You", it saw her particularly reuniting with producers Elliott, Dupri, and Bryan Michael Cox, all of whom had previously contributed to *After the Storm*.^[25] The album received a positive reception from most professional music critics, with *AllMusic* calling it a "concise and mostly sweet set of songs,"^[26] and *Entertainment Weekly* declaring it "a solid addition" to Monica's discography.^[27] While it debuted at number one on *Billboard's* Top R&B/Hip-Hop albums chart, and at number eight on the official *Billboard* 200, it widely failed to revive the success of its predecessors.^[28] Singles such as snap-influenced "Everytime tha Beat Drop" featuring Atlanta hip hop group Dem Franchize Boyz and Elliott-produced "A Dozen Roses (You Remind Me)" failed to reach the top forty of the regular pop charts.^[29] The same year, she made a cameo appearance in the American comedy-drama film *ATL*, playing the Waffle House waitress.

In August 2008, Monica appeared in the *Peachtree TV* reality show special *Monica: The Single* which tracked the recording of the song "Still Standing" for her same-titled sixth studio album.^[30] The following year, she lent her voice to the ballad "Trust," a duet with Keyshia Cole, that peaked in the top five on *Billboard* Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, and joined the cast of Rockmond Dunbar's drama film *Pastor Brown*.^[31] In 2010, with the success of the 2008 one-hour special, Monica joined the production of the *BET* network for her own series *Monica: Still Standing*, producing a spin-off her *Peachtree* show, containing the same concept. It focused on searching for a hit single for the album release and balancing her personal life of being a full-time mother and troubled past. The premiere and encore episode garnered 3.2 million total viewers, while the show itself was made the second highest series debut in *BET* history behind the debut of *Tiny & Toya*,^[32] and was given a B rating by *Entertainment Weekly*.^[33]

Featuring production by Stargate, Ne-Yo, and Polow da Don, *Still Standing* was released in March 2010 and garnered a generally positive response by critics, who perceived its sound as "a return to the mid-'1990s heyday" of contemporary R&B,^[34] The album debuted atop on *Billboard's* Top R&B/Hip-Hop albums chart, and number two on the *Billboard* 200 with opening week sales of 184,000 copies, becoming her highest-charting album in years. Lead single "Everything to Me" scored Monica her biggest chart success since 2003's "So Gone", reaching the top position of the *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop Tracks charts for seven weeks. The album was certified gold by the RIAA with domestic shipments of 500,000 copies within a single month.^[35] With it success, the album and "Everything to Me" were nominated for a Grammy Award for Best R&B Album and Best Female R&B Vocal Performance, presented at the 53rd *Grammy Awards* in 2011.^[36] In March 2010, it was announced that Monica and Hill had split in October 2009, surrounding rumors that he cheated.^[37] Monica and *NBA* player Shannon Brown met in June 2010 when while they shot her music video for her second single "Love All Over Me."^[38] On November 22, 2010, Monica married Brown in a secret ceremony at their Los Angeles home,^[39] follow by a second wedding in front of close family on July 9, 2011.^[40] Also in 2010, Monica joined Trey Songz on his *Passion, Pain & Pleasure Tour*, her first North American concert tour in ten years.^[41]

2011–present: *New Life* and *Code Red*

In 2011, Monica joined the debut season of NBC's reality talent show *The Voice* as an adviser to musician coach Cee Lo Green.^[42] In April 2012, her seventh studio album, *New Life*, was released. It marked her first release with RCA, following the disbandment of J Records in October 2011.^{[43][44]} Reception for the album was generally mixed to average;^[45] AllMusic complimented the album's "saucy, spirited, and soulful vibe"^[46] while Adam Markovitz of *Entertainment Weekly* criticized its "cheesy choruses and outdated tunes."^[47] Commercially, *New Life* debuted at number four on the *Billboard* 200 and number two on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums.^[48] The album spawned two preview singles, "Anything (To Find You)" and "Until It's Gone", both of which peaked in the top 30 on the *Billboard* R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. Lead single "It All Belongs to Me", another duet with singer Brandy, charted similarly, reaching number 23 on the same chart.^[49] The same year, Monica along with Fred Hammond was featured on gospel music recording artist James Fortune and FIYA's single "Hold On" which became a top five hit on the Christian Songs chart and garnered a Grammy Award nomination for Best Gospel Song at the 54th awards ceremony.^[50]

In October 2013, Monica appeared on the soundtrack of Malcolm D. Lee's Christmas comedy-drama *The Best Man Holiday* with her Jermaine Dupri-produced rendition of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas".^[51] In December 2015, her eighth studio album *Code Red* was released.^[52] Upon its release, the album received generally mixed reviews from most music critics, and debuted at number 27 on the US *Billboard* 200 chart.^[53] Leading single "Just Right for Me", a collaboration with Lil Wayne, reached number twelve on the *Billboard* Adult R&B Songs chart but failed to impact elsewhere, resulting in lackluster sales in general and the release of no further singles. In support of the album, Monica embarked on her first solo concert tour in years, *The Code Red Experience* to promote *Code Red*. In November 2016, Monica announced her departure from her longtime label RCA Records after two decades.^[54]

Personal life

Monica's career came to a slow down in 1999 due to relationship problems with her ex-boyfriend Jarvis Weems.^[4] In July 2000, the couple were together at the gravesite of Weems's brother, who had died in an automobile accident at age 25 in 1998, when Weems, without warning, put a gun to his head and committed suicide.^[4] "Afterward, I felt, 'What else could I have done?' You replay that situation over and over and you switch it around: Maybe if I had said this, or if I would have done that," she said in an interview with *The Cincinnati Enquirer* the following year. "It's just something that it's never possible for me to go back and change."^[4]

Monica met rapper Rodney "Rocko" Hill, a former SWA officer and real estate manager, shortly after Weems's suicide, a time which she described as her "weakest."^[55] While the couple soon began dating in fall of the same year, they ended their relationship in 2004. A few months later, Monica and Hill revived their relationship and she became pregnant with their first child. On May 21, 2005, she gave birth to their first son Rocko.^[55] Monica and Hill became engaged once again on Christmas Eve 2007, just a few days prior to the birth of their second child on January 8, 2008. The son was named Romelo Montez Hill, named after Monica's younger brother.^[56] The pair parted ways in early 2010.^[57]

In June 2010, Monica met NBA player Shannon Brown when looking for someone to play the love interest in her video for "Love All Over Me".^[38] Monica later announced her engagement to Brown via her Twitter account, posting a photo of a rose-cut diamond ring.^[58] On November 22, 2010, the couple married in a secret ceremony at their Los Angeles home. The marriage, however, did not become a matter of public record until

January 21, 2011, when Brown told the *Hip-Hop Non-Stop TV-Show*.^[59] They had a second wedding ceremony for family and friends in July 2011.^[60] On September 3, 2013, Monica gave birth to her third child, Laiyah Shannon.^[61]

Discography

- *Miss Thang* (1995)
- *The Boy Is Mine* (1998)
- *All Eyez on Me* (2002)
- *After the Storm* (2003)
- *The Makings of Me* (2006)
- *Still Standing* (2010)
- *New Life* (2012)
- *Code Red* (2015)

Awards and nominations

Filmography

List of television and films credits

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1996	<i>New York Undercover</i>	Herself	"If This World Were Mine" (Season 2, Episode 26)
	<i>Living Single</i>	Marissa	"Kiss of the Spider Man" (Season 3, Episode 24)
1997—1999	<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	Herself	"Mother's Day" (Season 7, Episode 29) "The End of the World as We Know It" (Season 9, Episode 23)
1999	<i>All That</i>	Musical Guest	"Monica" (Season 5, Episode 5)
2000	<i>Boys and Girls</i>	Katie	Film debut
	<i>Brak Presents the Brak Show Starring Brak</i>	Musical Guest	<u>Cartoon Network</u> musical TV special
	<i>Love Song</i>	Camille Livingston	TV movie
2001	<i>Felicity</i>	Sarah Robinson	"Miss Conception" (Season 4, Episode 4)
2003	<i>American Dreams</i>	Mary Wells	"R-E-S-P-E-C-T" (Season 2, Episode 2)
2006	<i>ATL</i>	Waffle House Waitress	
2009	<i>Pastor Brown</i>	Lisa Cross	
	<i>Monica: Still Standing</i>	Herself	<u>Reality series</u>
2016	<i>Almost Christmas</i>	Waitress	

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External links

- [Official website](http://www.monica.com) (<http://www.monica.com>)
 - [Monica](https://www.billboard.com/artist/monica/chart-history/) (<https://www.billboard.com/artist/monica/chart-history/>) at [Billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com)
 - [Monica](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0036571/) (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0036571/>) at [IMDb](https://www.imdb.com)
 - [Monica](https://www.allmusic.com/artist/p106830) (<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/p106830>) at [AllMusic](https://www.allmusic.com)
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