

Song Exploder
Joey Bada\$\$ - Hazeus View
Episode 50

Hrishikesh: You're listening to Song Exploder, where musicians take apart their songs and piece by piece tell the story of how they were made. My name is Hrishikesh Hirway.

Hrishikesh: This episode contains explicit language.

("Hazeus View" by JOEY BADA\$\$)

Hrishikesh: Joey Bada\$\$ is a rapper from New York. He's worked with other rappers like A\$AP Rocky and Action Bronson, but he collaborates most closely with his fellow members of Pro Era, a Brooklyn hip-hop collective. Joey Bada\$\$ released his debut album on January 20th 2015, his 20th birthday. It hit the top 5 on the Billboard Charts. For the track "Hazeus View," he worked with Kirk Knight, another member of Pro Era. In this episode, the two of them break down the process of making "Hazeus View," and how the lyrics reflect Joey's wide-angle take on religion, and how the beat was inspired by DJ Premier.

("Hazeus View" by JOEY BADA\$\$)

(Music fades)

Joey: My name is Jo-Vaughn Virginie, my stage name is Joey Bada\$\$. Talking about "Hazeus View," produced by Kirk Knight. He made the beat, and the beat came way before the lyrics. Kirk, say hi.

Kirk: So basically the way how this beat started, basically, I made this on a tour bus. I was actually listening to a lot of Primo, at the time, I was listening to "Ten Crack Commandments," like back to back to back to back.

("Ten Crack Commandments" by THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.)

Kirk: Even the way that he chopped it, it was, kind of like, on the one. Chopped up and like [sings the piano part] on the one, like when you nodding your head to the beat, that is like the piano just hits right when your head is bobbing down to the beat, you're like, you know what I'm saying? So I wanted to create a beat that was like that. I definitely looked at the sample of "Ten Crack Commandments."

("Vallarta" by LES MCCANN)

(Music fades)

Kirk: If you listen to the full sample of "Ten Crack Commandments," he only took, like, two, three seconds of it. Like literally just took those and made it into one of the most firest beats to me, like, you know,? So I wanted to challenge myself to be able to achieve the same thing.

Hrishikesh: So Kirk found this track by Italian composer, Amedeo Tommasi.

("Problema Ecologico" by AMEDEO TOMMASI)

Kirk: I found it off the internet. I found it on YouTube because sometimes you can find some heat off of youtube. This sample for "Hazeus View" is not that long, you know what I'm saying? It's literally three piano hits. That's it.

(Sample)

Kirk: I wanted to have, like, all of my kicks together, not like spaced out like, for example, if you had like a [mimics a drum beat]. I just wanted the kicks to be together, like you know what I'm saying? Basically the way that I did it, it was just like I had the hi-hats running,

(Hi-hat)

Kirk: but I wanted the kicks to be that particular way.

(Kick joins)

Kirk: That was

(Sample joins)

Kirk: basically the inspiration of "Hazeus View," that, like, that's exactly what I, like, wanted to do.

(Sample with beat)

(Music ends)

Kirk: I didn't give the beat to Joey until, like, a little later, like even after the tour, I was holding it for like a little hot minute.

Joey: He didn't want to give it to me.

Kirk: Basically.

(Sample with beat)

Joey: Kirk is that type of dude, like anytime on the road, he gets really inspired, like to create music so often traveling in between cities or just waiting at the venue, waiting to perform, Kirk would lope out, just go to his bunk, and just create beats. So I actually remember the exact moment, like he was standing outside his bunk, and he had his headphones on, and he was just bumping to this, to something crazy. And I'm just like, "Yo, what are you bumping to bro? Like, can I hear it [laughter]?" And then he played me this beat, and then I literally told him, I said, "Yo bro, that's one of the best beats you've ever made." I was also aware that, you know, Kirk was working on his own project. So I was definitely aware that, you know, this might be something that he would want to keep for himself, you know? So I didn't, like, ask for it right away, but I was like, "Yo bro, like this right here is fire, man. Like you have got to do something great with this."

(Sample with beat)

(Music ends)

Joey: When Kirk finally gave me the beat, I already had my verses ready by then. Because you know, usually I have just verses in the stash and then if it matches a beat that I like, you know, then I just lay it down.

(Beat)

Joey: I don't remember how it happened though bro. My engineer came over, and he gave me so much energy. He was like, "Let's work, let's work, I'm ready to work." I'm not a drinker at all, but for some reason this night, I was just like, "Yeah, let's work and let's drink." And I end up getting, like, just super faded, and I went into the booth, and like, I just gave it my all.

(Beat ends)

Joey: I liked the first lines of each verse. So the first verse,

(Vocals: "You ain't running with the apes yet / Apex at the Empire State neck")

Joey: "You ain't running with the apes yet / Apex at the Empire State neck." I'm saying that I am the apex. I am the one that's at the top in my city. I'm like King Kong at the top of the Empire State building, you know what I'm saying? So "apex at the Empire State neck." I actually wrote the chorus long before we even went on that tour. It was simple at the time, I didn't even think of it as being a chorus, I was actually writing a verse, and in the first lines of the verse was,

(Vocals: "And we probably share a trait or two / But I can't see what I can't relate to")

Joey: "And we probably share a trait or two / But I can't see what I can't relate to." Basically what it means is, like, we're all human. We all, at the end of the day, have so many things in common, but we see from different perspectives. And, you know, we act as if we have nothing in common because we're from different places or, you know, we're from different backgrounds, you understand what I'm saying?

(Vocals: "And we probably share a trait or two / But I can't see what I can't relate to / Hey Jesus / Will I ever get to see you through my hazeus?")

Joey: When I'm looking through my hazeus view, I'm looking at things from a perspective that's like aerial, looking down and seeing everything for what it is, the macro cosmic view of everything. I was combining two godly elements, which is Jesus and Zeus, you know, the sky god. My hazeus view is basically the view that I can look at everything from, and know that everything is, you know, equal, is the same. So it's just like, "Yo, I wonder if I will ever be able to see my Lord and Savior with this view, like would I be able to meet him, knowing what I know?"

(Sample)

Joey: I consider myself a spiritual person. As I grew up over time, I realized, you know, God is something that you could connect to anywhere you are, and at any moment in time, you know, you don't just have to go to church. The way I was raised, I remember it was this one conversation I had with my mom. I had to be

like 6 or 7, but I decided to ask her, I said, “Momma, what is our religion?” I knew that I went to church, and we had a very strong connection with God. So when I asked my mom this question, she said, “We don't have a religion, but we believe in God.” This conversation is definitely one of the conversations that I will remember to the day that I die, and one of the conversations that changed and shaped my life for the better. I just feel like, you know, if there's this whole bunch of religions out here, but you know, essentially there's one God, then, you know, why just confine myself to one religion? You see the thing with me, there's no limits with me.

(Music fades)

Hrishikesh: Now, here's “Hazeus View,” by Joey Bada\$\$, in its entirety.

(“Hazeus View” by JOEY BADA\$\$)

Hrishikesh: For a complete guide to the songs and samples mentioned in this episode, go to songexploder.net. You'll also find links for more info on Joey Bada\$\$ and Pro Era, including a link to buy this song. Kirk Knight has a solo album coming out, and there's a link to that as well. You can find all the past and future episodes of Song Exploder at songexploder.net or on iTunes, Stitcher, or wherever you download podcasts. Find the show on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @SongExploder. Next time on Song Exploder, The Magnetic Fields.

(“Andrew in Drag” by THE MAGNETIC FIELDS)

Hrishikesh: Song Exploder is a proud member of Radiotopia, from PRX, a curated network of extraordinary story-driven shows. Learn more at radiotopia.fm. My name is Hrishikesh Hirway, thanks for listening.

(“Andrew in Drag” by THE MAGNETIC FIELDS)

(Music fades)