

= No Church in the Wild =

" No Church in the Wild " is a song by American hip hop artists Kanye West and Jay @-@ Z from their first collaborative album Watch the Throne (2011) . It is the first track on the album and features vocals from Odd Future 's Frank Ocean and The @-@ Dream , although the latter is uncredited for his contributions to the song . The song explores themes of religion and decadence . The track received highly positive reviews from music critics , who praised Ocean 's vocal hooks , the depth of the verses , the cinematic production and the song 's power as an opening track .

The track was released as the seventh and final single from Watch the Throne . The song peaked at number 72 on the US Billboard Hot 100 and entered the top 40 on both the US Billboard Hot Rap Songs and Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs charts . The song received a music video directed by Romain Gavras released on May 29 , 2012 . The video does not feature any of the performers featured on the song and instead features anarchic riot footage and large street fights . The video received positive reviews from critics who praised the visuals of the video and the unique aesthetic presented in the video .

Jay @-@ Z and West performed the song as part of the setlist of their Watch the Throne Tour and Ocean performed his portion of the song on several different occasions during his November 2011 tour through North America and Europe . " No Church in the Wild " was featured in the theatrical trailers for the 2012 action film Safe House and the 2013 film adaptation of The Great Gatsby . The song itself has debuted at # 18 on the US Billboard YouTube 100 music video chart in July 2012 . The song received a nomination for Best Rap / Sung Collaboration and Best Short Form Music Video at the 55th Grammy Awards to be held in February 2013 . It later won in the category of Best Rap / Sung Collaboration , marking this Jay @-@ Z 's sixth win & Kanye 's fourth win in this category .

= = Background = =

Jay @-@ Z and Kanye West are American rappers who have collaborated on several tracks together , such as singles like " Swagga Like Us " , " Run This Town " , and " Monster " . In 2010 , they began production and recording on a collaborative record Watch the Throne . Frank Ocean is an R & B recording artist who released his debut mixtape Nostalgia , Ultra in early 2011 to critical acclaim . The release of the mixtape interested West , who was reported to be a large fan . West invited Ocean to write and sing on two songs off of the record . Frank wrote and provided vocals on tracks " No Church in the Wild " and " Made in America " and the songs were recorded in New York . The production of the track was handled by 88 @-@ Keys and Kanye West . 88 @-@ Keys reportedly " played 20 of his beats " to West and Jay , and " everybody in the room just started going crazy " . An hour later , they had singled out the beat that would become " No Church in the Wild . " The next day , 88 @-@ Keys met Frank Ocean and they recorded the chorus together and an unreleased spoken word portion . 88 @-@ Keys did not hear the final version until Jay @-@ Z showcased it at the invite @-@ only listening session at the Museum of Natural History 's planetarium in August 2011 . Producer and recording artist The @-@ Dream sings a verse on the track using AutoTune . The track impacted urban radio as the seventh and final single from Watch the Throne on March 20 , 2012 .

= = Composition = =

" No Church in the Wild " features a cinematic production style and serves as an " ominous opener . " According to Billboard , Odd Future singer Frank Ocean and The @-@ Dream lend their voices to the album 's " grim opener , " which sets the mood with a " gnarled guitar sample " . It features a bass @-@ heavy beat with guitar riffs , synthesizers , and drums . The song begins with Frank Ocean 's chorus followed by a Jay @-@ Z verse about various topics including philosophy , braggadocio and religion . On Ocean 's chorus , Los Angeles Times writer Randall Roberts stated " with it the listener enters a bejeweled realm , one filled with musings on the spoils of riches and the

chaos that accompanies it . " The chorus " underpins Jay @-@ Z 's contemplation of the relevance of the clergy and ancient philosophers to someone who makes his living on the streets , while R & B star Frank Ocean questions , " What is a God to a non @-@ believer ? " " The chorus then repeats and The @-@ Dream performs a bridge , preceding West 's verse where he boasts " You will not control the threesome . " West 's verse included references to Socrates , the perils of monogamy , " implied regicide " and both rappers " take turns describing a night of decadence that leaves blood on the coliseum walls . ? The song contains samples from " K Scope " as performed by Phil Manzanera , " Sunshine Help Me " as performed by Spooky Tooth and " Don 't Tell a Lie About Me and I Won 't Tell the Truth About You " as performed by James Brown . According to the Alexis Petridis of The Guardian , the track utilizes " unlikely samples " with " Ocean 's haunting vocal against Roxy Music 's Phil Manzanera playing a tricky prog riff . "

= = Reception = =

" No Church in the Wild " received mostly positive reviews from music critics and was often described as a highlight from Watch the Throne . Andy Gill of The Independent stated " the best track is surely the opener ' No Church in the Wild ' , whose deep , detuned twang groove , over a marching organ motif , is the most striking music on the album , promising rather more than the rest of the record is able to deliver . Both this and the other stand @-@ out track , " Made In America " , feature assured vocal refrains from Frank Ocean , while the two rappers muse over familiar themes of loyalty , sexuality and maternal solidarity . " Rolling Stone claims that it is one of the most musically impressive songs on Watch the Throne and describes the production as an " ominous , darkly funky bass groove and chilly synths tailor @-@ made for Ocean ? s off @-@ kilter crooning . " Matt Popkin from American Songwriter praised Jay @-@ Z 's verse and the menacing vibe of the song . NOW claims that " uncomfortably visceral opener ' No Church In The Wild ' ? with its filthy Phil Manzanera guitar sample and mournful Frank Ocean chorus ? cuts to the heart of Watch The Throne ? s power dynamic . " However , PopMatters criticized that the verses " feel a little out of focus compared to the hook and beat ? s opulence . " Sputnikmusic 's Tyler Fisher commented " 88 @-@ Keys creates a positively epic opening track with ' No Church in the Wild ' , full of creeping guitar riffs and pulsating bass , building tension that simply never releases . " Rolling Stone named the track the sixth best song of the year , reporting that " with Hov and Yeezy getting deep into arcane theology , this track is just another high . "

= = Promotion = =

The track was performed by West and Jay on their Watch the Throne Tour . Ocean performed his hook of the song at some of the performances during his 2011 concert series through the US and Europe . The song was used in the promotional ad and end credits for the film Safe House , the promo ad for The Great Gatsby , and in an advertising series for the 2013 Dodge Dart automobile .

A music video was filmed in late April 2012 in the Czech Republic by the Greek @-@ French director Romain Gavras , known for his work for M.I.A and Justice . There were two hundred extras , divided into police and rioters . The final video was released on May 29 , 2012 . The video is " clearly influenced by the protests and civil unrest that took place all across the country . " The video 's final shot bears similarity to an image from visual artist UnkleLuc 's project , The Wild . Rolling Stone reported that the " clip for " No Church in the Wild " depicts a grim clash between a large number of protesters and heavily armed and violent riot police . "

The video features neither West , Jay @-@ Z or Ocean , but instead focuses on two groups : " protestors and the police , both at war with one another . And yes , this is war ? it ? s an unsettling and savage clip , depicting protestors being beaten and pepper @-@ sprayed as they mercilessly combat with the police , though the protestors @-@ turned @-@ rioters also inflict a large part of the violence : they destroy property , loot stores , and set fire to cars ? and humans . The video refuses to take sides , as there ? s no winner when a conflict turns to violence . " Young men are beaten , choked , sprayed with mace and dragged across the concrete as Frank Ocean soulfully

croons , " Will he make it out alive ? " in time with the staged anarchy . By the end of the five @-@ minute video , " the freedom fighters seem to have notched a victory of some sort , standing in triumph in the face of their oppressors . But even if a single battle is won , there is no conclusive ending , meaning that the war still rages on . " Popping up at the end of the clip is an actual elephant , chained at the neck and trying to resist getting choked to death . Pitchfork Media gave the clip a positive review , however noted " Kanye 's " you will not control the threesome " / " never fuck nobody without telling me " verse seems pretty out of place when you 're watching a cop get set on fire . "

= = Personnel = =

Produced by 88 @-@ Keys , Kanye West and Mike Dean
Frank Ocean & The Dream 's vocal production by Om 'Mas Keith
Recorded by Noah Goldstein , Ken Lewis and Brent Kolatalo
Additional recording : Pat Thrall
Mixed by Mike Dean
Additional instruments : Ken Lewis
Additional vocals : The @-@ Dream
Mixed and recorded at (The Mercer) Hotel

= = Charts and certifications = =