

= Blame Game =

" Blame Game " is a song by American hip @-@ hop recording artist Kanye West from his fifth studio album , My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy (2010) . The song features recording artist John Legend and was produced by West , Justin Franks , and Mike Dean . The song features a hip hop skit provided by comedian Chris Rock . It contains a sample of " Avril 14th " , written by Richard D. James , known primarily by his pseudonym , Aphex Twin . Lyrically , the song contains West 's thoughts on past break @-@ ups and explores themes of unrequited love , heartbreak , and spousal abuse . Midway through the song , Rock delivers an extended monologue as the new boyfriend of West 's past lover .

Critics were generally complimentary and praised Legend 's vocal delivery . The appearance by Rock was widely noted as a surprising element of the song and received mixed criticism , though some critics described it as a highlight . It charted on the South Korean Gaon Chart at position 81 . West and Legend performed " Blame Game " together on Vevo Presents GOOD Music at SXSW . The song was featured in West 's 2010 short film Runaway . West planned to produce a music video for the song featuring Amber Rose but she declined the offer of appearing and West scrapped the video .

= = Background = =

" Blame Game " was recorded in Oahu , Hawaii , where most of the sessions for My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy took place . West opted to work with more familiar songwriters to maintain artistic privacy and keep a low profile after several of his publicized controversies . West recorded the song with vocalist John Legend , a frequent collaborator of his since West 's 2004 debut album The College Dropout . During an appearance on Ustream , West announced that Legend was set to appear on a song from his currently upcoming album , titled " Blame Game " . During the announcement , West cited " Blame Game " as his favorite song from the album , which was at the time unfinished . The song developed from Legend and West 's brainstorming , which also led to several other tracks , including " All of the Lights " . Rapper Pusha T was erroneously reported to have provided backing vocals on the song .

West asked comedian Chris Rock to appear on the song . Rock , a fan of West 's , mused that he was more than happy to collaborate with West , and said , " you 'd be amazed at how many people want to work with you if you just ask , if you just make a call . " He had previously collaborated on other hip hop songs , such as with rappers Ludacris , Ol ' Dirty Bastard , and Ice Cube on the track " You Ain 't Gotta Lie (Ta Kick It) " . Rock described his collaboration with West as exciting in nature , commenting that he was always open to working on unusual ventures . In an interview with The New York Times , Rock went into detail about the composition of the song :

? I did that quicker than I read scripts that they offer me money to do ... I thank [Kanye] so much it probably freaks him out . Especially at this late date , to get on something , the album of the moment , that stuff is priceless , you can ? t put a price tag on that . I felt invigorated by it . I ? ve still got my fastball . "

The song is partly inspired by West 's relationship with model Amber Rose . West originally met Rose in 2008 , and they subsequently developed a romantic relationship , before having a dramatic break @-@ up in 2010 ; Rose cited allegations of adultery . Rose also said that West had written the song about their relationship , commenting that West " talked reckless about me on his album " .

= = Composition = =

The track is built on a recreation of electronic musician Aphex Twin 's piano composition " Avril 14th " . The song begins with a minute long introduction sung by Legend . " Blame Game " has a lush , cello @-@ driven production with predominant piano . After Legend 's introduction , West raps his verses in a highly melodic manner , almost singing his lines . West 's forceful delivery expresses hurt and contempt . The song 's soulful sound juxtaposes West 's angry lyrics : " been a long time

since I spoke to you in a bathroom , ripping you up , fuckin ' and chokin ' you " . He subsequently raps less antagonistically and repeatedly confesses " I can 't love you this much " .

West 's vocals are substantially manipulated throughout the song from " naturally clear @-@ sounding and ominously pitched @-@ down as it pans back and forth " , as they are slowed down , sped up , edited substantially , and altered in various ways , giving the song a brooding , ominous mood . Pitchfork Media 's Ryan Dombal wrote that this effect " bottoms out with a verse in which Kanye 's voice is sped up , slowed down and stretched out ... The effect is almost psychotic , suggesting three or four inner monologues fighting over smashed emotions . " AbsolutePunk 's Drew Beringer commented that the vocal altercations gives the sense of the " multiple personalities and paranoia he tries to overcome . "

On " Blame Game " , West attempts to call his past lover , but he receives a call back instead and he hears a conversation between her and Chris Rock , who begins an extended monologue approximately five minutes into the song . Chris Rock performs a vulgar , profanity @-@ ridden sketch in which he compliments his lover 's dress sense and sexual technique , and asks her who taught her these skills . Each time he asks , the answer is the same : " Yeezy taught me . " . Andy Gill of The Independent commented that a similar " alliance of aristocratic piano and cello with less rarefied elements underpins ' Blame Game ' , a brutal rumination on West 's sexual appetite " .

= = Reception = =

" Blame Game " generally pleased contemporary critics . The Village Voice 's Sean Fennessey said that it is " not the flashiest or most forward @-@ thinking song on the album , but certainly the most earthbound . And therefore the most important . " Chicago Sun @-@ Times writer Thomas Conner complimented Rock 's " hilarious , X @-@ rated spiel " and cited the song as the best example of West 's ability " to contrast the light and dark pieces against each other , the profane and the sacred " , writing that it utilizes " Legend 's soft , pretty voice to sing a smooth , troubling refrain . " Rolling Stone writer Rob Sheffield called it one of the funniest of West 's career , a " confessional " song where he " honestly struggles to figure out why he has to be such a douchebag . " Steve Jones of USA Today cited the song as the album 's *pièce de résistance* that " plays out with growing hostility over John Legend 's moody piano work . " Nitsuh Abebe of New York mused that the song successfully showcased a " gloomy and elegiac " presentation .

David Browne of Time called it " that rare , effortless fusion of penthouse @-@ boudoir R & B and hip hop grit " , but was ambivalent about its segue " into an interminable , decidedly unfunny skit in which a guy keeps asking a woman how she learned such mind @-@ boggling bedroom moves . " In contrast , Kitty Empire of The Guardian felt that " comedian Chris Rock is hilariously foul @-@ mouthed at the end of Blame Game . " Becky Bain of Idolator called the song epic , but felt that Rock 's appearance served as a detriment to the song , writing ; " we ? d kill the last two minutes with Rock ? s unfocused , not @-@ as @-@ funny @-@ as @-@ we @-@ think @-@ it ? s @-@ supposed @-@ to @-@ be rambling , but otherwise , this is quite a beautiful track . " " Blame Game " charted on South Korean Gaon Chart at position 81 .

= = Marketing = =

The song was also featured in Runaway , a 35 @-@ minute music video directed by West set to music from My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy . After a traumatic dinner sequence , the song is played during a tense moment between West and the phoenix . At the Vevo Presents GOOD Music musical presentation , the song was performed by both West and Legend together . The two performed a few song together before Legend performed his own single " Ordinary People " separately .

A planned music video for the song was going to feature an appearance by Amber Rose , however she declined the offer . Rose commented that she passed on the video because she " just felt like Chris Rock 's part was disrespectful " , believing that the song painted her in a negative light . Another reason for her declining to appear in the video because of her then @-@ current

relationship with rapper Wiz Khalifa , feeling that appearing in an ex @-@ boyfriend 's musical venture would be disrespectful to Khalifa . West told Rose that both " Blame Game " and the Runaway film were partially inspired by his relationship with her .

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from liner notes for My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy (2010) .

Chris " Hitchcock " Chorney ? cello

Andrew Dawson ? engineer , mixing

Mike Dean ? additional production , bass , composer , mixing , piano

DJ Frank E ? composer , producer

Ryan Gilligan ? engineer

Richard D. James ? composer (sample)

Phil Joy ? engineer

John Legend ? composer , featured artist

Salma Kenas ? additional vocals

Anthony Kilhoffer ? mixing

Chloe Mitchell ? composer (poem)

Chris Rock ? additional vocals

Kanye West ? composer , producer , primary artist

= = Charts = =