

Ramy - Let's start off by taking it back to your roots, how did you start off in music?

JB - Ever since I can remember, I've always been a drummer. You know drumming on my chest whenever I could, which led to me learning how to play the drums at eight, I taught myself how to play them by watching the drummers at the church so I've always been involved in music.

I grew up in the South, been a Croydon boy all my life.

How I got into producing, one day, one of my guys called Josh was always into singing and wanted to make a track, and I was always up for a challenge, I had already been interested in the structure of music and how it all comes together. I had never been taught how it was done so was extremely curious. So I took the opportunity and made the track with him if I'm honest it wasn't the best, however it was the stepping stone to unveiling the hidden talent within me, ignited a passion for music production. Every lunch break I'd go to the music room and spend my time there, I took up Music Technology in my GCSE's and yeah that was the start.

Ramy - How come you chose the genre of Drill as your main focus as a producer, rather than hip-hop or grime?

JB - You know what, I can't lie and sit here and say I was the biggest fan of grime. I'm not a grime kid, I grew up on the Ja Rule, Fat Joe's, Rnb, and gospel. Drill was just something that I wasn't a massive fan of at first until I heard "Crashed" by AM & Skengdo. I was blown away like this tune is HARD what is this? I used that as sort of a gateway to see what I could make of it. I've always worked on hip-hop and that side of music, as I was always been inspired by Nines and his come up in the scene. However Drill, was the genre that helped boost my career, it wasn't by choice, it just kinda happened. When I worked with Skengdo & AM when I started producing drill, but it wasn't necessarily the usual type of drill you'd hear. It was more of a mellow touch to a drill genre. Over time I started working with a lot of producers already familiar with the scene, like Gotcha and Ghosty. Gotcha mainly taught me the essence of drill production, and I just took it from there.

Ramy - You seem to have a very unique ambient technique when it comes to production. Especially with the tracks, you've produced for Drake, 410, Unknown T and many others. Adding what seems like a haunting presence in the background of the track, where did that come from? What inspired you to place them in your tracks?

JB - To be honest man, more time I make tracks because I like it, If I like a sound then I like a sound, I've always been a melody-driven person, so if the melody is sweet, then I'd be like "This is a bit of me". I would personally place it more along the lines of "Epic", for example, if you listen to the track I did with 410 "No Shade" they described it as "Epic", and that's is the direction I was going for. It personifies the feelings and emotions of preparing for a battle or war, and that's what I wanted to project in the tracks. To put it quite frankly, I like to make my music a journey, and by adding little hints of dark ambience through my tracks, like say they do in

“Game Of Thrones” it adds to the whole atmosphere of the adventure. So I try to add it whenever I can in beats I produce.

Ramy - I totally agree, It sets the pace for the whole track itself, cause the listener is expecting a huge build-up, which adds to the epic environment produced by drill songs in itself. Especially the drill tracks that you have produced, as the expectation is always set high, you expect the best of the best, not just lyrically from the artists, but the beat accompanying said lyrics, as it creates a feeling of preparing yourself for war or battle, there is nothing quite like it. So in terms of your work outside of the UK, what inspired you to take your talents overseas?

JB- I've always wanted to go overseas, you know what I mean, I've always told my boys that from years ago. I remember having conversations with some of my guys, about how my sound is more universal than just being boxed into one sub-section of music. I always knew it was bound to happen at some point, I just didn't know how, so I left that for God to open a door for me when the time was right. In terms of producers based outside the UK, I was always inspired by numerous individuals in the industry such as Timbaland, 40 and Quincy Jones.

Ramy - In terms of your influence, I believe you are one of the pioneering producers in the UK scene at the moment. Building the next generation of artists that will be taking over the scene, and also one of the main individuals placing the bar higher for producers all over the country, recently taking it overseas with Drake and French Montana. What does that all mean to you? If you could summarise how upcoming producers can learn from your journey, what would you tell them?

JB- For me personally it feels overwhelming you know, to even be considered that is such a blessing. As a kid, you always think about the aspirations and dreams that you have but you never know the journey that it will take to get there like you are at A and I want to get to B but you don't know what's in-between. To be considered as one of the leading producers in the UK at the moment, to even inspire people, I feel very touched that I can have that effect on the next generation of talent coming up. The way I look at myself is that I'm just a kid from Croydon, who has taken a shot and scored after hitting the crossbar 100 times over. I just wanna give God the thanks for blessing me on my journey, as never in a million years would I have thought that I'd be considered as someone to inspire others. Like I get daily messages from others saying how I inspire them and getting thanks for my work. I'm just really grateful.

In terms of me pushing to do more, I feel like the stage I'm at is only a minor stepping stone as to what is to come, there are always levels to this stuff. For the upcoming youth, I'm just going to keep doing what I'm currently doing, which is collaborating with people, giving advice whenever I can, explaining my journey for people that are actually serious about making it in the music scene.

People need to understand that how I've done it, is no different to how anyone else can do it. Like keep taking your shots until you score, it's important to be **Persistent**. Always work with people, no matter how big their following is. Like I always usher in people, and promote people whenever I can on my Instagram, showing who's coming up next. I always try to connect with people. Just keep working! I try to universally connect with people, and get the message

across that if you don't get to work with me, you have a vast amount of others who are willing to work with you. We have this stigma here in the UK that you only wanna work with the big names, rather than focusing on the upcoming talent. Those are the people that are going to create a sound for you, they are gonna help you. Just because you shoot for the stars and don't get to work with a certain person doesn't mean you should stop trying to work. It has taken me over ten years of working and connecting with people to be at the position I am today. On my journey people have called me trash, some artists didn't want to use my beats. But those same people came back to me saying good of a job I'm doing years later. So don't be discouraged.

Ramy - I 100% agree with everything you just said, especially when you spoke about how people would rather focus on the big names rather than the small upcoming names.

JB - Again that's what I try to tell people, don't shoot for the big names. Those big names are only going to pay attention to you, by luck or if God said it's your time. You send your beat to the email and they like it, they sometimes just take it and won't even promote it, so it takes patience and like I said before, connecting with people. For example, an artist that I had built up with was a guy called IQ, we had done a bashment project, and back then I didn't do bashment. Like I had heard of it, but never thought I'd jump on a track. We pushed each other and grew with each other and then "Scream" came out and that was like a UK hit, as every bashment mix has it now. So I always tell people, work with people that you can actually build up, because if you build people up they will always remember you, and will always kinda be an author of the sound that you've created there. Which will then attract more artists to come work with you, as they want a similar type of work. ("That was a bit of a long explanation my bad bro" he laughs after)

Ramy - It's all good, that was perfect, the longer the explanation and the more detail given the easier it will be for new producers to understand as there is currently a lot coming up on the block. Let's move to a bit of a less serious question, how did you come up with your tag? "Who made this? JB Made this"

JB- "My tag?" Breaks into laughter. " I can't even lie before it used to be something else and my boy T said it was whack, so I was like Ok cool, I needed to come up with something else. So I did something universal for a bit with 104, so people could know the name whenever I produced a track, but I always deeply wanted something that connected to my name JB. One day I was just driving, and I was thinking "Who made it?" hmmm that should be a good question, like who has a question in their tag, no one has a question in their tag, this would be lit! so then I put two and two together, and basically caught lightning in a bottle.

Ramy - After doing a bit of research, I found out that you co-founded a record label "Finesse Foreva" how did that come about?

JB- When I was 15 me and T we had our label with the other guys, it was called KSL back then, so we were just doing our thing, the only problem was it turned into a bit more of a youth club rather than a business, we had done events and we had a studio and we had a lot of people coming in, and it turned into more of a social thing rather than a business. When everyone

started to go to uni and doing their own thing, it tore the company tore up. We took a hiatus for a year, then came back rebranded the studio to "104 foreva" and you know it was doing alright, we always felt like we needed a third person, I'm not like a mad businessman. T needed someone who could business support, and we went to one of the meals and needed a TV for our studio. So T made a call to a guy named SK who we went to school. We ended up having a conversation about what we were all kinda doing at the time in terms of business, so we decided to merge our two labels together as said previously we needed a third person. His company was called "Finesse", and the team behind him didn't like the idea of merging, so he decided to leave as our ideas and plan was more fitting with his vision, so yeah the rest is history. It's just crazy because I never thought we'd ever be doing this with SK.

Ramy - It sounds like a full-circle had happened in your life then, laughing

JB- laughing, literally man, you couldn't even script it if you tried to, I just remember SK being the guy in school selling sweets to all the students, so yeah I never thought I'd ever been doing business with him on such a scale.

Ramy - That's incredible man, I just wanna thank you for your time, and look forward to hearing more from you in the future.

JB - Thank you for having me man, it's been a pleasure.