

= Photograph (Ed Sheeran song) =

" Photograph " is a song recorded by the English singer @-@ songwriter , Ed Sheeran , for his second studio album , x (2014) . Sheeran wrote the song with Snow Patrol member , Johnny McDaid , who had a piano loop from which the composition developed . After recording several versions with other producers , Sheeran eventually solicited help from Jeff Bhasker ; the collaboration generated a version that Bhasker further enhanced for months . The ballad derives its music primarily from an acoustic guitar , piano and programmed drums . With visually descriptive lyrics , it discusses a long @-@ distance relationship inspired by Sheeran 's own experience of being away from his then @-@ girlfriend while he was on tour .

The song received generally positive commentary from critics , who noted the lyrics and Sheeran 's use of imagery . " Photograph " served as the fifth and final single from the album . It reached the top five on the main singles charts in more than five countries . In the US , where it peaked at No. 10 , " Photograph " became the third single from the album to have reached within the top ten . In the UK , it reached No. 15 and has since been certified platinum for sales of 600 @,@ 000 units . The single has also been certified double platinum in Australia and Canada , and platinum in New Zealand and Italy .

The single 's release on 11 May 2015 followed the premiere of the music video on 9 May 2015 . The video is a montage of real home footage of Sheeran 's infancy , childhood and adolescence , providing insight on his private early life such as his inclination to playing music instruments and fondness of Lego . The video was nominated for Best Video at the 2016 Brit Awards . Sheeran performed the song on television shows and on his x Tour , which ran from 2014 to 2015 .

On 9 June 2016 , it was revealed that Sheeran was being sued by songwriters Martin Harrington and Thomas Leonard , writers of Matt Cardle 's 2011 single " Amazing " , for \$ 20 million for copyright infringement .

= = Background and composition = =

Ed Sheeran wrote " Photograph " in May 2012 with Johnny McDaid , instrumentalist and background vocalist of the British band , Snow Patrol . Sheeran toured with the band , for whom he provided opening performances in select North American dates . McDaid had a three @-@ note piano loop that became the basis of " Photograph " . The song 's development began when Sheeran , while in a hotel room in Kansas City , was humming " loving can hurt , loving can hurt " to the loop that was playing on McDaid 's laptop . Sheeran recalled : " I started humming , and then [McDaid] put a beat behind it . "

They developed ideas for the song while Sheeran was building a Lego and McDaid was working on his laptop . After four hours , Sheeran picked up a guitar and they began properly structuring the composition . According to Sheeran , they ended up composing the song " within about half an hour " . Both realized what had transpired only after listening back to the song the following day ; they then decided on recording it . Sheeran completed writing the song while in Denver , Colorado .

Sheeran credited " Photograph " as the first record " properly " completed for his second studio album . According to him , he had " probably " recorded 60 to 70 versions of the song ; these varied from live to that with piano accompaniment . Aside from the earlier versions he made with McDaid , Sheeran had recordings with songwriter @-@ producer , Jake Gosling , who produced much of Sheeran 's debut album , and producer , Rick Rubin , who was involved in other tracks from the follow @-@ up album . However , Sheeran thought these versions " never fit " and he eventually solicited help from producer , Jeff Bhasker . This particular collaboration generated a version that Bhasker continued to enhance for several months . Emile Haynie was credited on the album 's liner notes for his additional production . On 24 January 2015 , Sheeran recalled the backstory of " Photograph " for the VH1 Storytellers .

= = Music , lyrics and inspiration = =

An acoustic pop ballad , " Photograph " derives its music from an acoustic guitar , piano , strings , organ , electric and bass guitar , and programmed drums . The melody builds up with the guitar strums and piano keys ; the drums , strings , organ etc then follow . It has a tempo of 108 beats per minute and the originally published key is in E major . " Photograph " features a chord progression that is common in popular music .

The lyrics to the song chronicle a long @-@ distance relationship . It contains detailed imagery such as the protagonist remembering his girlfriend kissing him " under the lamppost , back on 6th street " , and keeping a picture of him " in the pocket of [her] ripped jeans " . These lyrics were inspired by Sheeran 's own experience on a long @-@ distance relationship . He dated Nina Nesbitt , a Scottish singer @-@ songwriter , for more than a year . While on this relationship , Sheeran spent five months away from Nesbitt : three months while on a concert tour with Snow Patrol and further two months on his own tour .

= = Release = =

In February 2013 , Sheeran played a demo version of " Photograph " to a German radio station . This performance was not recorded in film or audio , and was the only play Sheeran made prior to the song 's release as part of an album . Sheeran favoured the song as one of the best in the album and claimed : " I think [" Photograph "] will be the one that will change my , kind of , career path . " He also asserted that " Photograph " would serve as the " collateral " song that could " sell [the album] " even if the rest of the tracks would not prove appealing .

The song was released as an " instant grat " digital download to the iTunes Store on 20 June 2014 ; it served as the final of seven promotional singles from his second studio album , × (2014) . On 22 April 2015 , through his Twitter account , Sheeran announced that " Photograph " would be the next single off × . It was released on 11 May 2015 to hot adult contemporary format , and the following day to contemporary hit radio in the US . On 12 June 2015 , " Photograph " was released to the German market in CD format with the B @-@ side , " I Will Take You Home " . The latter track was featured in the American television sitcom , Cougar Town .

" Photograph " served as the fifth and last single released from the album . Of the five singles , preceded by two upbeat songs such as the lead single , " Sing " , " Photograph " was the second mellow track released from × . The first was " Thinking Out Loud " , the third single , which is a blue @-@ eyed soul record produced by Gosling . According to Sheeran , no one from his label wanted " Thinking Out Loud " as a single release ; they favoured " Photograph " as the " big song " . " Photograph " was supposed to be the main single , but when " Thinking Out Loud " spent several weeks within the top 20 on the UK Singles Chart albeit not in radio rotation , the latter song was kept as the third single .

= = Critical reception = =

Upon the album 's release , critical response to " Photograph " was generally positive . In his track @-@ by @-@ track review of x for Billboard magazine , Jason Lipshutz suggested that the line " Loving can hurt sometimes / But it 's the only thing that I know " in " Photograph " was the " lynchpin line of the whole album " . Sarah Rodman of The Boston Globe had the same sentiment ; she called the song " haunting " and felt it " [crept] up on you with [its] tunefulness " . Jamieson Cox of Time described Sheeran 's use of " detail and powerful imagery " in the lyrics as " smart " ; Cox opined that it " [brought the song] to life " .

Neil McCormick of The Daily Telegraph deemed the track " soulful balladry " and felt it showcased that Sheeran " can slip smoothly through the gears " on the album . Lipshutz described his singing as being " restrained " over " hesitant " acoustic guitar strum before the " arena drums kick in " . Paul Cantor of Vibe picked " Photograph " as one of the standouts from the album , and noted that the song 's " brooding arrangement is an emotional roller coaster " . Kitty Empire of The Observer called " Photograph " a " swelling ballad " , and suggested that Sheeran 's writing was " particularly calculated " . In his review for MusicOMH , John Murphy also felt that " Photograph " was "

calculated and a bit cynical , almost as if it 's been written specifically as a soundtrack to a particularly emotional scene in a US television series " .

On her analysis of the lyrical content of the album , Annie Zaleski of The A.V. Club expressed that Sheeran 's " self @-@ awareness extends to the rest " of the album by tackling homesickness in " Photograph " , for instance . Meanwhile , Carolyn Menyes of the Music Times wrote in her review of the song that " in the grander scheme of x , ' Photograph ' doesn 't quite seem to line up lyrically " , and noted that most of the album 's songs explored " the feelings of a lover scorned , cheating exes and a little bit of the excess life " . She also said : " Simply put : ' Photograph ' is one of Sheeran 's more simplistically beautiful songs . "

McDaid 's involvement in the song was noted by a few critics . Kevin Harly of The Independent wrote : " If you didn 't know Snow Patrol 's Johnny McDaid produced the ballad ' Photograph ' , its stolid plod through clichés about how lovin ' ' can hurt ' and ' heal ' should tell you " . Meanwhile , Dave Hanratty of Drowned in Sound remarked : " ... the cloying ' Photograph ' ... is co @-@ written and produced by a member of Snow Patrol should surprise nobody , given that it follows their heartstring @-@ tugging script so resolutely . At least it moves . " The Herald 's Alan Morrison felt that " Photograph " was " identikit Snow Patrol " .

= = Commercial performance = =

" Photograph " and the rest of the album 's tracks entered the UK Singles Chart due to high streaming rates . The single debuted at number 44 on the chart week ending 5 July 2014 , ten months prior to the single 's release . It peaked at number 15 , and has spent 50 weeks on the chart as of the week ending 5 November 2015 . On 25 September 2015 , the British Phonographic Industry certified the single platinum for sales of 600 @,@ 000 units .

In the US , the single reached number 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 and marked the third top 10 from the album . With " Photograph " , Sheeran also became the ninth male solo artist since 2010 to spawn four top 20 hits from a single album , excluding deluxe editions . In specific formats such as the Mainstream Top 40 , the single reached the top 10 on the week ending 29 August 2015 ; it gave the album four that have achieved the threshold . On 21 July 2015 , the Recording Industry Association of America certified the single gold for sales of over 500 @,@ 000 units . Elsewhere , the single reached top five in Austria , Canada , Germany , Ireland , Slovakia , and South Africa .

In April 2015 , commercial streaming company Spotify released a report of the most streamed tracks worldwide under the category sleep . " Photograph " placed at number 18 ; it joined Sheeran 's other six songs ranked in the top 20 . Sleep is one of the company 's most popular categories that , according to Spotify , " people also use for general relaxation and to help themselves unwind " . The Guardian columnist Tim Dowling suggested that the report was an indication of " very popular , slightly mellow songs that keep cropping up on sleep playlists " but not a list of a " carefully curated journey to unconsciousness " .

= = Lawsuit = =

On 9 June 2016 , it was revealed that Sheeran was being sued by songwriters Martin Harrington and Thomas Leonard , writers of Matt Cardle 's 2011 single " Amazing " , for \$ 20 million for copyright infringement . The lawsuit says : " Given the striking similarity between the chorus of Amazing and Photograph , (the) defendants knew when writing , publishing , recording , releasing , and distributing Photograph that they were infringing on a pre @-@ existing musical composition . "

= = Music video = =

An accompanying music video for " Photograph " was released on 9 May 2015 . The video is a montage of real home footage . Sheeran sourced the clips from his father , who was then compiling it into DVDs for their family Christmas present . He initially intended the clips for inclusion in a documentary that was being produced around that time ; but looking through the collection , he

thought it might work for a music video . Sheeran also admitted he could not attend to an actual video shoot , hence he opted for the montage . Emil Nava , who had previously worked with Sheeran on his other promotional music videos , directed " Photograph " . Editor Ellie Johnson worked with Sheeran 's father while in central London . According to Johnson , they spent a weekend gathering the clips used in the montage .

The montage chronicles Sheeran 's infancy , childhood and adolescence (1990s and 2000s) . It features Sheeran playing various music instruments (including piano , cello , bass guitar , acoustic and drums) , suggesting that he was musically inclined at a young age . He is also shown displaying his skill in Bodhrán , an Irish frame drum . Other footage depicts a teen Sheeran busking in Galway , Ireland . In another clip before the final , Sheeran is shown performing to a crowd at a festival . Daniel Kreps of Rolling Stone noted that the clips also revealed Sheeran 's " lifelong obsession with Legos " , an object the latter referenced on his 2011 single " Lego House " .

According to Ryan Book of the Music Times , the media form utilized in the montage contradicted the song 's title . Kreps stated that the video was reminiscent of Kurt Cobain : Montage of Heck , a documentary film about Nirvana front man and 1990s rock icon Kurt Cobain . According to Kreps , the private life of both artists in their youth were revealed through real home videos .

= = Live performances and usage in media = =

" Photograph " was performed on television prior to its commercial release . On 13 December 2014 , Sheeran appeared on The X Factor UK , where he gave his first televised performance of the song . This performance contributed to the song 's first ascent inside the top 40 on the UK Singles Chart . Sheeran also performed the song for various US television shows such as on Good Morning America , The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon , and Undateable , at Canada 's Much Music Video Awards , and at the 2015 Global Citizen Festival . The song was part of the setlist in Sheeran 's x Tour ; the concert tour ran from 2014 to 2015 .

In other usages , English singer Foxes covered the song for the BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge . The song was used , free of charge , in a video campaign that was launched on 2 March 2015 . According to Same Dimmer of the Coventry Telegraph , the video " [highlighted] the issue of child sexual exploitation " in Warwickshire , a non @-@ metropolitan county in England . The song is also used in the trailer and soundtrack for the movie Me Before You .

= = Other recordings = =

The song was recorded by Jordan Feliz , for his debut studio album , Beloved , released by Centricity Music . A critic says the acoustic rendition shows , " his falsetto shining " , while another writes it is an " incredible " cover song , on a track meant to convey the temporal nature with which worldly mortal relationships have compared to one with God 's son Jesus Christ .

= = Formats and track listings = =

CD single

" Photograph " ? 4 : 19

" I Will Take You Home " ? 3 : 59

Digital download (Remixes)

" Photograph " (Felix Jaehn Remix) ? 3 : 22

" Photograph " (Parvin Riller Remix) ? 3 : 05

= = Credits and personnel = =

Ed Sheeran ? vocals , writer , acoustic guitar

Johnny McDaid ? writer

Jeff Bhasker ? producer , piano , keys , electric bass

Emile Haynie ? additional producer , drum programming
Tyler Sam Johnson ? engineering , electric guitar , drum programming
Mark " Spike " Stent ? mixing
Geoff Swan ? engineering
Davide Rossi ? string arrangement
Stuart Hawkes ? mastering
Credits adapted from the album liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Radio and release history = =