

= I Heard It Through the Grapevine =

" I Heard It Through the Grapevine " is a song written by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong for Motown Records in 1966 . The first recording of the song to be released was produced by Whitfield for Gladys Knight & the Pips and released as a single in September 1967 ; it went to number two in the Billboard chart .

Smokey Robinson & the Miracles included their version on their 1968 album , Special Occasion . The Marvin Gaye version was placed on his 1968 album In the Groove , where it gained the attention of radio disc jockeys , and Gordy finally agreed to its release as a single in October 1968 , when it went to the top of the Billboard Pop Singles chart for seven weeks from December 1968 to January 1969 and became for a time the biggest hit single on the Motown label (Tamla) .

The Gaye recording has since become an acclaimed soul classic , and in 2004 , it was placed on the Rolling Stone list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time . On the commemorative 50th Anniversary of the Billboard Hot 100 issue of Billboard magazine in June 2008 , Marvin Gaye 's " Grapevine " was ranked 65th . It was also inducted to the Grammy Hall of Fame for " historical , artistic and significant " value .

In addition to being released several times by Motown artists , the song has been recorded by a range of musicians including Creedence Clearwater Revival , who made an eleven @-@ minute interpretation for their 1970 album , Cosmo 's Factory ; and has been used twice in television commercials ? each time using session musicians recreating the style of the Marvin Gaye version : the 1985 Levi 's commercial , " Launderette " , featuring male model Nick Kamen , and the 1986 California raisins promotion with Buddy Miles as the singer for the clay animation group The California Raisins .

= = Composition = =

By 1966 , Barrett Strong , the singer on Motown Records ' breakthrough hit , " Money (That 's What I Want) " , had the basics of a song he had started to write in Chicago , where the idea had come to him while walking down Michigan Avenue that people were always saying " I heard it through the grapevine " . The phrase is associated with black slaves during the Civil War , who had their form of telegraph : the human grapevine . Producer Norman Whitfield worked with Strong on the song , adding lyrics to Strong 's basic Ray Charles influenced gospel tune and the single chorus line of " I heard it through the grapevine " . This was to be the first of a number of successful collaborations between Strong and Whitfield .

The lyrics tell the story in a first person narrative of the betrayal of the singer 's romantic partner , how he heard about it indirectly via gossip from other people (through the " grapevine ") , and the emotional pain and disbelief he is suffering .

= = Motown recordings = =

Producer Norman Whitfield recorded " I Heard It Through the Grapevine " with various Motown artists . The first known recording is with the Miracles on August 6 , 1966 , though there may also have been a recording with the Isley Brothers , or at least Whitfield intended to record it with them ; however a track has not turned up ? some Motown historians believe that a session may have been scheduled but cancelled . The Miracles ' version was not released as a single due to Berry Gordy 's veto during Motown 's weekly quality control meetings ; Gordy advised Whitfield and Strong to create a stronger single . The Miracles version later appeared on their 1968 Special Occasion album , and a slightly different take , possibly from the same session but unreleased , appeared on the 1998 compilation album , Motown Sings Motown Treasures .

Marvin Gaye 's version was recorded in spring 1967 , and is the second known recording , though was also rejected by Gordy as a single , and would also later go onto an album , In the Groove . The third recording was in 1967 with Gladys Knight and the Pips in a new , faster arrangement . Gordy accepted the new arrangement and the Gladys Knight version was released as a single in

September 1967 , reaching number 2 in the charts . When Gaye 's album with his version of Grapevine was released in August 1968 radio disc jockeys were playing the song , so Gordy had it released as a single in October , and it went to number one in December .

In 1968 , Bobby Taylor & the Vancouvers recorded a version for their debut album based on Gladys ' recent hit ; however , after hearing the Marvin Gaye version , they felt they 'd made the wrong choice . In 1969 , Whitfield produced a version for the Temptations " psychedelic soul " album , Cloud Nine , in which he " brought compelling percussion to the fore , and relegated the piano well into the wings " . In 1971 , the Undisputed Truth became the final Motown act to record the song in its Marvin @-@ styled version . The song was also covered by the Chi @-@ Lites on their 1969 debut album Give It Away .

= = = Marvin Gaye = = =

Whitfield recorded the song with Marvin Gaye over five sessions , the first on February 3 , 1967 , and the final one on April 10 , 1967 . Recordings of this version took more than a month due to Whitfield overdubbing Gaye 's vocals with that of the Andantes ' background vocals , mixing in several tracks featuring the Funk Brothers on the rhythm track , and adding the string section from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra with an arrangement by Paul Riser .

The session featuring Gaye led to an argument between the producer and singer . Whitfield wanted Gaye to perform the song in a higher key than his normal range , a move that had worked on David Ruffin during the recording of the Temptations ' hit , " Ain 't Too Proud to Beg " . The mixture of Gaye 's raspy vocals and the Andantes ' sweeter harmonies , made Whitfield confident that he had a hit ; however , despite approval from Motown 's Quality Control Department , Gordy blocked the release .

= = = Gladys Knight & the Pips = = =

Gladys Knight & the Pips recorded " Grapevine " on June 17 , 1967 in Motown 's Studio A , with Norman Whitfield as producer . After hearing Aretha Franklin 's version of " Respect " , Whitfield rearranged " Grapevine " to include some of the funk elements of the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section . According to David Ritz , Whitfield set to record a song that would " out @-@ funk " Aretha . After Whitfield presented the demo tapes , Gladys Knight , Bubba Knight , William Guest , and Edward Patten worked for several weeks on their vocal arrangement . To make the song suitable for Gladys , the first line of the second verse (" I know a man ain 't supposed to cry / But these tears I can 't hold inside ") was altered to (" Take a good look at these tears in my eyes / Baby , these tears I can 't hold inside ") . After much talk , Gordy reluctantly allowed the Pips ' version to be a single on September 28 , 1967 on Motown 's Soul label .

= = Releases = =

The first release was the Gladys Knight & the Pips version on September 28 , 1967 on Motown 's Soul label , with " It ? s Time to Go Now " on the B @-@ side . Motown put little support behind it and the Pips relied on connections with DJs across the United States to get the record played . The Pips ' version of " Grapevine " reached number one on the Billboard R & B chart on November 25 , 1967 , and stayed there for six weeks , making it the group 's second R & B number one after 1961 's " Every Beat of My Heart " . It reached two on the Billboard Pop Singles chart the same month , with the Monkees ' " Daydream Believer " holding top spot . It was Motown 's best @-@ selling single to that point . The song was later placed on the Gladys Knight & the Pips album Everybody Needs Love .

Whitfield wanted Gordy to release Gaye 's " Grapevine " as a single , but Gordy didn 't want to release another version after the Pips had already made a hit out of it . In September 1968 , Whitfield added " Grapevine " to Gaye 's new album In the Groove . On release " Grapevine " became a radio hit and , according to Gordy himself , " The DJs played it so much off the album that

we had to release it as a single " . So Gaye 's version was released as a single on October 30 , 1968 . Gaye 's " I Heard It Through the Grapevine " eventually outsold the Pips ' , and until The Jackson 5 's " I 'll Be There " 20 months later , was the biggest hit single of all time on the Motown label . It stayed at the top of the Billboard Pop Singles chart for seven weeks , from December 14 , 1968 to January 25 , 1969 . Gaye 's " Grapevine " also held number one on the R & B chart during the same seven weeks , and stayed at number one in the United Kingdom for three weeks starting on March 26 , 1969 . The label was pleased with the success , although Gaye , depressed because of issues such as the illness of singing partner Tammi Terrell (which would kill her less than a year later) , was quoted as saying that his success " didn 't seem real " and that he " didn 't deserve it " .

Due to the song 's success , In the Groove was re @-@ issued as I Heard It Through the Grapevine and peaked at number two on the R & B album chart and number sixty @-@ three on the album chart , which was at the time Marvin 's highest @-@ charted solo studio effort to date . Because of the success of both versions , " I Heard It Through the Grapevine " was the first and last number one on the Billboard R & B chart in 1968 : the Pips version was the first week of January , the Gaye version the last week of December . Gladys Knight was not pleased that Gaye 's version usurped her own , and claimed that Gaye 's version was recorded over an instrumental track Whitfield had prepared for a Pips song , an allegation Gaye denied . In 1985 , one year following Gaye 's death , the song was re @-@ released in the UK reaching number eight thanks to a Levi 's commercial (starring Nick Kamen) .

= = Legacy = =

The Gaye recording has become an acclaimed soul classic . In 2004 , it was placed at number 80 on Rolling Stone 's list of The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time , with the comment that Whitfield had produced the song with a number of artists using different arrangements , and that on the Marvin Gaye recording he had a " golden idea " when he set the song " in a slower , more mysterious tempo " . In a new Rolling Stone list published in 2011 , the single was placed slightly lower at 81 .

On the commemorative 50th Anniversary of the Billboard Hot 100 issue of Billboard magazine in June 2008 , the Marvin Gaye version was ranked as the 65th biggest song on the chart . It was also inducted to the Grammy Hall of Fame for " historical , artistic and significant " value .

= = Covers = =

In addition to being recorded several times by Motown artists , the song has been covered by musicians including Creedence Clearwater Revival who recorded an eleven @-@ minute version for their 1970 album , Cosmo 's Factory , that was released as a single , reaching 43 on Billboard 's chart , with more modest success in other countries , and funk musician Roger Troutman whose extended version lifted off his 1981 solo album , The Many Facets of Roger , brought the song back to number one on the R & B chart in early 1982 marking the third time the single reached the top spot on that chart . It also made the Billboard Hot 100 , peaking at number seventy @-@ nine . Queen Latifah used the music as a basis for her 1998 single " Paper " , produced by Pras Michel for her album Order in the Court .

= = Media = =

" I Heard It Through the Grapevine " has been used twice in television commercials ? each time using session musicians recreating the style of the Marvin Gaye version . For the 1985 Levi 's 501 commercial , " Launderette " , featuring male model Nick Kamen , agency BBH and director Roger Lyons , owing to budgetary constraints , brought in Karl Jenkins and Mike Ratledge to recreate the sound of the Marvin Gaye original with Tony Jackson , a Barbadian background singer for Paul Young , handling vocals and P. P. Arnold on backing vocals . The commercial 's success prompted Tamla @-@ Motown to re @-@ release Gaye 's single with the Levi 's 501 logo on the sleeve ? " an example of integrated marketing almost before the term was invented " . The record went to number

eight on the UK Singles chart , marking its second chart performance . A year later , in 1986 , Buddy Miles was the singer for the clay animation group The California Raisins which sang it as part a TV advertising campaign .

Marvin Gaye 's version of the song is used in the opening credits of The Big Chill (1983) as each of the main characters gets to hear (through the " grapevine ") about the death of their college friend , and then travels to his funeral ; the song serves in an extradiegetic fashion to both unite the main characters ' friendship and to locate it nostalgically for the viewer .

= = Personnel = =

Lead vocals by Marvin Gaye

Background vocals by The Andantes : Jackie Hicks , Marlene Barrow and Louvain Demps

Organ by Earl Van Dyke

Drums by Richard " Pistol " Allen and Uriel Jones

Instrumentation by the Funk Brothers and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

String arrangement by Paul Riser

= = Charts = =