

= Through the Wire =

" Through the Wire " is the debut single from American hip @-@ hop artist Kanye West .

West wrote and recorded the song with his jaw wired shut after a car accident in October 2002 . The song samples Chaka Khan 's 1985 single " Through the Fire " and was released on the last day of September 2003 as the lead single from his debut studio album , The College Dropout (2004) .

" Through the Wire " peaked at number fifteen on the Billboard Hot 100 and received positive reviews from music critics . The song was nominated for a 2005 Grammy Award for Best Rap Solo Performance , but lost to Jay @-@ Z 's " 99 Problems " . The music video was financed by West , who was inspired by an Adidas advertisement . It won Video of the Year at the 2004 Source Hip Hop Awards .

= = Conception = =

On October 23 , 2002 , West was in a California recording studio producing music for Beanie Sigel , Peedi Crakk , and The Black Eyed Peas . After leaving the studio at around 3 a.m. in his rented Lexus , he had a near @-@ fatal accident when he was cut off by a car , ran head @-@ on into traffic , and collided with another car near the W Hotel . He was taken to the Cedars @-@ Sinai Medical Center , mentioned in the song as " the same hospital where Biggie Smalls died , " and had his jaw wired to his face in reconstructive surgery . Two weeks after being admitted to hospital , he recorded the song at the Record Plant Studios with his jaw still wired shut . The song 's title refers to the wires used to hold his broken jaw together . When asked about how the incident changed his music , West stated :

Well , the only thing this accident 's is saying is , " I am about to hand you the world , just know at any given time I can take it away from you . " To nearly lose your life , to nearly lose your mouth , your voice , your whole face , as a rapper ... and I had to be on TV ! My face looks crazy to me now ... But I have to just thank God for the situation that I am in ... " Through The Wire " is the worst thing that could 've possibly happen to me , and now it 's obviously the best thing . Look how it exploded !

The track circulated on West 's mixtape Get Well Soon ... before being officially released in re @-@ recorded form in late 2003 . Although he initially had trouble convincing Roc @-@ A @-@ Fella Records executives to let him make his own album as a rapper , he was able to change their minds after the song 's release .

= = Music and reception = =

" Through the Wire " was inspired by the 2002 car accident and West has provided a comedic account of his difficult recovery . The chorus and instrumentals samples a " pitched up " version of Chaka Khan 's 1985 single " Through the Fire " . West did not receive writing credit for the song , which instead went to David Foster , Tom Keane , and Cynthia Weil , who wrote " Through the Fire " . West 's rapping is described as " a Snoop @-@ meets @-@ Hova flow , twisting up his words with the patented ' izz ' inflection . " PopMatters called it " as riveting and moving as everyone says it is " and it " may be the album 's most startling personal horror story (though it 's also a song of hope and gratitude) " . Allmusic 's Andy Kellman said it was " a daring way to introduce himself to the masses as an MC " and it " couldn 't have forged his dual status as underdog and champion any better . " Kellman described the content as " heartbreaking and hysterical " and that despite his " inevitable slur , his words ring loud and clear " .

The New York Times ' Kelefa Sanneh described him as " a wounded hero beating the odds " and it " gave him a chance to prove that he was the exception to the rule that producers can 't rap . " Stylus Magazine called it " a poignant , pop @-@ culture @-@ packed account of Kanye ? s near @-@ fatal run @-@ in with Chaka Khan " . By rapping with his jaw sewed up , The Source noted that West used " the element of surprise to his advantage " . HipHopDX listed the track as one of " the classics that created " the album 's hype , and Pitchfork Media stated it was " chock @-@ full @-@ of @-@ clever " . Vibe magazine wrote that " West 's sideways approach to music making

stands out " on the track and the " raw , teeth @-@ clenching narrative falls in line with his gutwrenching soul beats . " At the 2005 Grammy Awards , the track was nominated for Best Rap Solo Performance , which was won by Jay @-@ Z 's " 99 Problems " .

= = Chart performance = =

" Through the Wire " debuted at number ninety @-@ four on the Billboard Hot 100 and peaked at number fifteen for five weeks . It remained on the chart for twenty @-@ one weeks . It performed better on the urban contemporary charts , reaching number eight on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Singles & Tracks and number four on the Hot Rap Tracks . In the United Kingdom , it debuted at number nine on the UK Singles Chart where it peaked for two weeks and exited the chart after nine weeks . The track charted lower in other European countries , where it reached the top thirty in Ireland , Sweden , and the Netherlands , the top fifty in Belgium and Switzerland , and number sixty @-@ one in Germany . Its maximum peak time in those countries lasted one week . The single entered the New Zealand Singles Chart at number twenty @-@ four and peaked at number sixteen .

= = Music video = =

The music video was directed by Coodie and Chike and it premiered in November 2003 . Kanye West , who financed the video , conceived ideas for the clip after seeing an Adidas advertisement in BlackBook magazine . He stated , " I don 't like gettin ' ideas from direct shit ... I like to pull ideas from all the way over here . Sometimes my vision can 't be explained in words , ' cause I couldn 't have even told you in words how I envisioned that video ending up . " Chike recalled the making of the clip , saying , " one day Coodie calls me out the blue about a concept he and Kanye had for a video revolving around Polaroid snapshots . I was leaving work at 7 PM only to come back at 10 PM , work all night then go home at 7 AM " . Coodie stated that " If we would have wrote a treatment " for the video , " they would have shot that down . They had to see it to understand . Otherwise they 'd have said , ' No , Kanye should be rapping at a party , with lots of girls poolside ' " . It was awarded the Video of the Year at the 2004 Source Hip Hop Awards .

= = Track listing = =

CD single

" Through the Wire "

" Through the Wire " (instrumental)

" Two Words " (main)

" Two Words " (clean)

" Two Words " (instrumental)

UK CD single

" Through the Wire " (radio edit)

" Two Words " (radio edit)

" Through the Wire " (instrumental)

" Through the Wire " (multimedia track)

= = Personnel = =

Information adapted from The College Dropout liner notes .

Songwriters : Kanye West , David Foster , Tom Keane , Cynthia Weil

Record producer : Kanye West

Recording engineer : Francis Graham

Mix engineer : Manny Marroquin

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =