

= If U Seek Amy =

" If U Seek Amy " (edited for radio as " If U See Amy ") is a song recorded by American singer Britney Spears for her sixth studio album , Circus (2008) . It was released on March 10 , 2009 by Jive Records as the third single of the album , and was chosen by a poll on Spears 's official website . " If U Seek Amy " was written and produced by Swedish producer Max Martin , who also wrote previous hits for her first three albums and marked as Spears 's comeback song to Martin since 2001 . In the song , Spears is looking for a woman named Amy in a club , and although it appears to be about sex , it is actually about how society perceives her life . Musically , " If U Seek Amy " makes use of instruments such as keyboards and timpani .

" If U Seek Amy " was generally well received by contemporary critics , who praised Spears 's confident vocals and frequently cited it as the highlight of the album . After its release , " If U Seek Amy " caused controversy in English @-@ speaking countries for the euphemism and lyrical content , along with the fact that if pronounced in certain dialect , " If U Seek Amy " could be thought of as a double entendre that is interpreted as " F @-@ U @-@ C @-@ K Me " which caused the Parents Television Council (PTC) threatening to file indecency complaints against any radio station that played the song during daytime . An edited version of the song titled " If U See Amy " was released in some regions , including in stations owned by Clear Channel Radio and Austereo Radio Network . " If U Seek Amy " was a moderate success , reaching the top twenty in Australia , the United States , Canada , Ireland , the United Kingdom and many other countries worldwide . It was also her third single from Circus to reach the top twenty in the United States .

The music video for " If U Seek Amy " begins with a parody of an America 's Newsroom report by Megyn Kelly and portrays Spears at a sex party that takes place at her house . Towards the end , she changes into conservative housewife clothes and opens the front door with her family while paparazzi take pictures of them . It references some of her previous music videos such as " ... Baby One More Time " and " Piece of Me " . Critics noted the similarities with her past work and also compared it to the film Eyes Wide Shut . " If U Seek Amy " was performed at The Circus Starring Britney Spears (2009) and the Femme Fatale Tour (2011) . It is currently performed as part of the revamped set list of Spears ' Las Vegas residency show , Britney : Piece of Me (2013 ? 17) .

= = Background = =

The song was co @-@ written and produced by Max Martin , who wrote hits for Spears ' first albums , including " ... Baby One More Time " (1998) and " Oops ! ... I Did It Again " (2000) . This marked the first time they worked together since her third studio album , Britney (2001) . Recording sessions took place at Conway Recording Studios and Sunset Studios in Hollywood , California . Background vocals by Kinnda and Martin were recorded at Maratone Studios in Stockholm , Sweden . The recordings were mixed by Serban Ghenea at MixStar Studios in Virginia . On December 5 , 2008 , a poll was added to Spears ' official website to choose the third single , involving ten other songs from Circus . On January 7 , 2009 , it was announced that " If U Seek Amy " had won , receiving 26 % of the total votes .

= = Music and lyrics = =

" If U Seek Amy " runs through a dance @-@ oriented beat and features many instruments , including keyboards , snare , bass drums , electric guitars and timpani . According to the sheet music published at musicnotes.com by Hal Leonard Corporation , the song has a beat of 130 beats per minute and is written in the key of A minor . Spears 's vocal range spans from G3 @-@ C5 . In the song , Spears seems to be looking for a woman named Amy in a club . It has been suggested that Amy is either Amy Winehouse or an alter ego of Spears herself . The verses end with the hookline " Hahahehehahaha " , which , according to Poppy Cossins of The Sun , is fitting to " the album 's carnivalesque overtone " . The chorus begins with the lines " Love me , hate me / Say what you want about me " , a reference to the public 's perception and fascination with Spears ' life . This

presents Spears both as " an object of desire and a punching bag " . According to Neil McCormick of The Daily Telegraph , this line also hints at the public image of British singer Amy Winehouse .

The title , " If U Seek Amy " , is a mondegreen , meaning to sound like " F @-@ U @-@ C @-@ K me " when heard in the chorus , " All of the boys and all of the girls are begging to , if you seek Amy . " This euphemism was compared to the title of Van Halen 's 1991 album , For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge , as well as a portion of James Joyce 's Ulysses .

= = Critical reception = =

The song received generally positive reviews . Chris Williams of Billboard said the song is " Max Martin and Spears at their best : a stomping dance floor beat with building synths prodding the song along and the singer sounding like she 's having a blast being the bad girl " . Rolling Stone writer Caryn Ganz called the song one of the standout tracks of the album . Alexis Pretridis of The Guardian commented that her stronger and confident delivery in the chorus was noticeably lacking in the rest of the album . Joey Guerra of The Houston Chronicle also said that the " more aggressive , pointed persona " Spears adopts in the song is one of the high points of the album . The Emory Wheel 's writer Julia Cox called it " the album 's strongest and most unorthodox song " . Ricardo Baca of The Denver Post named the song the most fascinating track of the album and commented on the euphemism , saying " It 's trashy and clever , and it 's also quite fun . And fun is exactly what Spears should be aiming for " . However , there were also some negative reviews . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic said the song is " a Katy Perry @-@ styled exercise in crass commercial carnality that is at once the best and worst song here " . Chris Willman of Entertainment Weekly called it " puerile " and added that " it 'll be a middle @-@ school sensation " . NME named it one of the filthiest songs of all time .

= = Public reception = =

Controversy was first reported by Australian music site Undercover.com.au on December 5 , 2008 , after the release of the album . Leonie Barsenbach , a housewife from Sydney , said , " I was astonished and totally taken aback when I heard my 5 and 7 year old kids walking around the house singing ' F @-@ U @-@ C @-@ K ' ... When I asked them what it was , they told me it was Britney Spears . I was horrified . I got them the Circus album but there was no warning on it ... It is extremely offensive . I feel deceived . " Rolling Stone writer Daniel Kreps defended Spears , arguing that parents should have been aware of the singer 's musical themes . After the song was announced as the third single from the album , American radio stations were unsure about playing the track due to its double entendre in the chorus . Program directors of Z100 and KIIS @-@ FM compared the issues to be faced by their radio stations to the release of the 2005 The Black Eyed Peas single , " Don 't Phunk with My Heart " , saying that " listeners thought it was the other word , and so we had to change it to ' mess ' " . Program director Patti Marshall of Q102 said " It 's ok to put in on an album , have fun with it , but we 're publicly owned , you know ? [...] It 's not about us . It 's about the mom in the minivan with her 8 @-@ year @-@ old . " WFLZ 's Tommy Chuck said his station produced their own edit of the song that replaced " seek " with " see " , with the station 's disc jockeys referring to it as " If U See Amy " .

Shortly after , the Parents Television Council (PTC) threatened to file indecency complaints with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) against any station that played the song between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. PTC President Tim Winter said " there is no misinterpreting the lyrics to this song , and it 's certainly not about a girl named Amy . It 's one thing for a song with these lyrics to be included on a CD so that fans who wish to hear it can do so , but it 's an entirely different matter when this song is played over the publicly owned airwaves , especially at a time when children are likely to be in the listening audience . " RBR.com reported that " interestingly , Circus was reviewed by Common Sense Media , another organization whose mission is to help parents manage their children 's media consumption . It rated it appropriate for age 13 and up , but made no specific mention of ' If U Seek Amy ' . Even more interestingly , reputed incoming FCC Chair Julius

Genachowski is a founding board member of Common Sense . " The threats of the PTC were later extended to cable music channels that played the music video ; however , the FCC does not have control over cable .

On January 23 , 2009 , Tom Poleman , senior vice president of programming for Clear Channel Radio , announced they planned to play an edited version . Sharon Dastur of Z100 added that Spears had recorded a new version of the song and the new edit would be provided by Jive Records . David Hinckley of the Daily News commented that " Clear Channel , which laid off 9 % of its workforce this week , is hardly in the mood to finance an FCC fight right now " . Finally , a radio edit titled " If U See Amy " was released to American radio stations , which changes the " seek " to " see " . The amended version was released in the UK in May . While the song has not officially been renamed or released in Australia , some radio stations , such as those belonging to the Austereo Radio Network , play the censored version , while others continue to play the uncensored . Both the music video and the international radio single remain " If U Seek Amy " .

= = Commercial performance = =

According to Nielsen SoundScan , " If U Seek Amy " sold over 107 @, @ 000 digital copies in the United States within two weeks of the album 's release . On April 11 , 2009 , the song peaked at number seventeen on the Billboard Hot Digital Songs . On May 9 , 2009 , the song peaked at number nineteen on the Billboard Hot 100 , making Circus the first Spears album to have three top twenty hits since her 1999 debut , ... Baby One More Time . As of March 2015 , " If U Seek Amy " has sold 1 @. @ 3 million digital downloads in the United States according to Nielsen SoundScan . It is her tenth best @- @ selling digital single in the country . In Canada the song debuted at eighty @- @ eight on December 20 , 2008 . It returned on February 14 , 2009 at eighty @- @ six before reaching the thirteenth position , where it finally peaked on April 4 , 2009 .

" If U Seek Amy " debuted at number forty @- @ nine on the ARIA Singles Chart on February 16 , 2009 , and moved to a peak position of eleven on March 30 , 2009 , also becoming the chart 's " greatest gainer " . It has since been certified gold by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) with sales of over 35 @, @ 000 copies . " If U Seek Amy " entered the UK Singles Chart at number forty @- @ five on April 6 , 2009 due to its rising digital sales . After its physical release , it peaked at number twenty on May 10 , 2009 . According to The Official Charts Company , the song has sold 105 @, @ 000 copies there . " If U Seek Amy " also achieved success worldwide , reaching the top ten in Belgium (Wallonia) , France and Turkey , and the top twenty in Belgium (Flanders) , Ireland , New Zealand and Sweden .

= = Music video = =

= = = Development = = =

The music video for " If U Seek Amy " was filmed on February 7 , 2009 , at Pacific Palisades , California and was directed by Jake Nava , who previously worked with Spears for her " My Prerogative " music video . Spears was styled by David Thomas for the video . During the scenes at the party , she wears American Apparel wet @- @ looking leggings and a black corset from London lingerie designer Bordelle with diamond @- @ shaped holes . She also wears a pair of red high @- @ heeled Louboutins with rouced petals , that were not available for sale until a month after the video was released . When she is dressed as a housewife , Spears has a blonde wig , wears a pale pink sweater , a white skirt from Derek Lam and a Lacoste polo shirt . The music video premiered on March 12 , 2009 , on both Virgin Mobile 's official website and Spears 's official websites .

= = = Synopsis = = =

The video starts with a news anchor (played by Kristina Mitchell) saying the title of the song above

a news banner that reads " Britney Spears song lyrics spell out obscenity in disguise " . This is actually a parody of an America 's Newsroom report by Megyn Kelly . It then skips to a house , in which a sex party is coming to an end . Spears starts singing while sitting on the edge of a bed while the people that surround her are getting dressed . She gets up and looks out the window . As the first verse ends , she picks up a pair of panties from the floor , recalling her personal struggles and the " Piece of Me " video . She dances with four male dancers in the first chorus . During the second chorus , she dances with four other female dancers dressed in cheerleading outfits , while many men are watching them dance . The screen fades to white and Spears begins to change into a conservative ' 50s @-@ inspired housewife outfit . As the chorus begins again , she comes out of her bedroom . She walks down the stairs , with dancers surrounding her and a woman gives her a potholder , which she uses to pick up a pie . After this , she walks out the front door of the house and is joined by her seemingly conservative @-@ looking husband and children , one of them dressed with the schoolgirl outfit Spears wore in the " ... Baby One More Time " video . As they go down the walkway , they are surrounded by paparazzi , who have no idea what goes on behind closed doors . While the kids and husband wave , Spears smiles for the camera and blows a kiss . The video then ends with the news anchor saying , " Doesn 't make any sense , does it ? " .

= = = Reception = = =

James Montgomery of MTV stated that the video manages to combine elements from her previous music videos , such as the style of " Everytime " and the attitude of " Stronger " . He also referred to it as " a pretty amazing amalgamation of all things Brit , and a nice primer of her entire career up to this point " . Rolling Stone writer Daniel Kreps compared the party on the video to the 1999 film Eyes Wide Shut and added that " this may be the first Spears video ever crafted strictly with the morally @-@ lax Internet in mind , a brazen clip that doesn 't have to tone down its explicit nature lyrically and visually in order to get airplay " . Chris Johnson of the Daily Mail compared Spears ' housewife style to one of her looks in a 2001 Pepsi commercial . Leah Greenblatt of Entertainment Weekly said , " it 's kind of difficult to believe the song 's real meaning will get past even the thickest listener , the video itself is pretty tame ... almost disappointingly so " . The reviewer also compared the hairstyle of Spears during the housewife scenes to Marilyn Monroe .

= = Live performances = =

Spears performed the song during 2009 's The Circus Starring Britney Spears . After a performance of " Boys " from Britney , Spears performed a military drill with her male dancers , which ended with her putting on a faux fur vest to perform " If U Seek Amy " . At the end , Spears pulled a giant pink hammer and proceeded to knock her dancers off the stage , in a similar way to Whac @-@ A @-@ Mole . Jerry Shriver of USA Today said in the opening night of the tour , " [the] single ' If U Seek Amy ' draws a huge roar and sing @-@ along from the crowd as Spears shakes her long blond mane " . Craig Rosen of The Hollywood Reporter commented , " The artist that raised the ire of parents from the beginning in her scandalous schoolgirl outfit also continues to use shock @-@ and @-@ awe tactics . Her latest , ' If U Seek Amy ' [...] was included in the set , much to the delight of her young fans " .

" If U Seek Amy " was also performed by Spears at 2011 's Femme Fatale Tour . Spears reappeared onstage after " Lace and Leather " to perform a jazz @-@ inspired version of the song , wearing a white skirt and standing over a fan , recalling Marilyn Monroe 's iconic scene in The Seven Year Itch (1955) . The backdrops behind her showed 1940s crime film @-@ inspired black @-@ and @-@ white footage while photographers in colorful outfits took pictures of her . Rick Florino of Artistdirect said , " Marrying old school detective fare and stadium @-@ size anthems is something no other pop star has done , and once again Britney 's the first . " Nicki Escudero of the Phoenix New Times stated that it was " nice " to hear remixed versions of older hits , " such as the jazzy ' If You Seek Amy , ' [sic] the sultry and Middle Eastern @-@ inspired ' Boys ' and the sped @-@ up ' Toxic ' . "

Spears currently performs the song at her revamped Las Vegas residency show , Britney : Piece of Me , at The AXIS theater at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino . The performance , which pays homage to Spears ' ' Circus ' era , immediately follows the song " Circus " (2008) on the set list .

= = Track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Vocals : Britney Spears

Writers : Max Martin , Shellback , Savan Kotecha and Alexander Kronlund

Producer : Max Martin

Mixing : Serban Ghenea

Protools editing : John Hanes

Programming : Shellback and Max Martin

Background vocals : Britney Spears , Kinnda and Max Martin

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =