

= Run of the Mill (George Harrison song) =

" Run of the Mill " is a song by English musician George Harrison , released on his 1970 triple album All Things Must Pass . Harrison wrote the song shortly after the Beatles ' troubled Get Back sessions in early 1969 , during a period when his growth as a songwriter had inadvertently contributed to the dysfunction within the Beatles ' group dynamic . The lyrics reflect the toll that running their company Apple Corps had taken on relationships within the band , especially between Paul McCartney and the other three Beatles , as well as Harrison 's dismay at John Lennon 's emotional withdrawal from the band . Commentators recognise " Run of the Mill " as one of several Harrison compositions that provide an insight into events behind the Beatles ' break @-@ up , particularly the difficulties surrounding Apple .

The song 's release coincided with a falling out between Harrison and McCartney , which contributed to the latter taking legal action to dissolve the Beatles partnership . The musical arrangement for " Run of the Mill " bears the influence of the Band , with whom Harrison had spent time in Woodstock before starting work on the Get Back project . Co @-@ produced by Phil Spector , the recording features contributions from Gary Wright and former members of Delaney & Bonnie 's Friends band , including Jim Gordon , Jim Price and Bobby Whitlock .

Biographers and reviewers have variously described " Run of the Mill " as an essay on karma , a tale of lost friendship , and a love song to the Beatles . Olivia Harrison has named it among her favourites of all her late husband 's compositions . An alternative version of the song , performed solo by Harrison on acoustic guitar , appears on the 2012 compilation Early Takes : Volume 1 .

= = Background = =

Author Simon Leng has written of George Harrison experiencing an " incredible phase of creativity " throughout 1969 , following his time spent in Woodstock , New York with Bob Dylan and the Band in late 1968 . Commentators note that Harrison 's growth as a composer would have to happen almost in spite of the Beatles , given his customary junior status to bandmates John Lennon and Paul McCartney . The Beatles ' Get Back sessions in January 1969 inspired the Harrison songs " I Me Mine " and " Wah @-@ Wah " , both of which reflected the fractious situation within the band , and his return to their fold after walking out of these filmed rehearsals allowed him to dictate terms for their immediate future . McCartney and Lennon now looked at Harrison " with new respect " , author Alan Clayson suggests . Mersey Beat founding editor Bill Harry was another to notice a change in Harrison compared to earlier in the 1960s , writing : " He wasn 't under the domination of the others . He wasn 't a passenger any more . " An additional factor in Harrison 's assuredness was his introduction to the Hare Krishna movement , following a meeting with devotee Shyamasundar Das at Apple Corps headquarters in December 1968 .

The financial problems within the Beatles ' Apple business empire became another divisive issue at this time . From summer 1968 until the appointment of Allen Klein as business manager in March 1969 , McCartney was a regular presence at Apple 's central London headquarters , calling staff meetings and urging financial restraint . While noting that all the individual Beatles were demanding employers , Apple press officer Derek Taylor later described McCartney as " the bossiest of the bossy " ; according to Tony Bramwell , Apple Records ' head of promotions , Lennon and partner Yoko Ono inflicted " their own reign of terror " . On 18 January , Disc magazine published what author Peter Doggett describes as " a heroin @-@ fuelled monologue " by Lennon in which he said of Apple 's finances : " If it carries on like this , all of us will be broke in the next few months . " While McCartney sought to appoint his in @-@ laws , New York lawyers Lee and John Eastman , as the band 's business advisors , Lennon 's outburst attracted the attention of the less conservative Klein . The latter effectively became the Beatles ' manager when Harrison and Ringo Starr also chose to put their faith in his tough approach to business . Refusing to acknowledge Klein as his representative , McCartney later cited this division as the first " irreconcilable difference " among the four Beatles , leading to the band 's break @-@ up in April 1970 .

Although he was actively involved as a director of Apple Records , and remained committed to

running the label until its winding down in 1973 , Harrison viewed the concept of Apple as Lennon and McCartney 's egos " running away with themselves or with each other " . Harrison 's relief from the tedium of business meetings through February and March 1969 was reflected in his composition " Here Comes the Sun " , which he wrote in Eric Clapton 's garden while " sag [ging] off " from Apple . Around the same time , Harrison wrote " Run of the Mill " , a song addressing the failure of friendships within the band ? or as he put it , " the problem of partnerships " .

= = Composition = =

The song title was a play on " trouble at t 'mill " , a Northern English term for conflict at the local factory or workplace . Doggett suggests that " run of the mill " might also have been a condemnation of Harrison 's songwriting uttered by one of his bandmates during the fraught Get Back sessions at Twickenham Film Studios .

In his 1980 autobiography , I , Me , Mine , Harrison describes the lyrics to " Run of the Mill " as " the first song I ever wrote that looked like a poem on paper " . The words run in a continuum , uninterrupted by instrumental breaks of any kind . The opening verse outlines what theologian Dale Allison terms " a statement of responsibility " :

Everyone has choice

When to or not to raise their voices

It 's you that decides ...

In I , Me , Mine , Harrison introduces these words with a reference to McCartney 's heavy @-@ handedness at Apple and likens the scene to a Monty Python comedy routine . In the lyrics to " Run of the Mill " , author Ian Inglis notes that , rather than " exacerbat [ing] the poisonous atmosphere that hangs over the group , by merely adding to the endless stream of insults and counterinsults " , Harrison shows " genuine regret " at what has transpired and " warns against trying to shift the blame " for one 's actions . Another biographer , Joshua Greene , suggests that partly through his association with the Hare Krishna movement , Harrison was now " too sure of his life 's higher purpose to waste any more time on petty squabbles " .

Inglis views part of the second verse as a reference to the " abuse and humiliation " that Harrison had received at Twickenham , echoing the sentiments of " Wah @-@ Wah " . In the verse @-@ two lines " Another day for you to realize me / Or send me down again " , Doggett similarly recognises Lennon 's " unfeeling " criticism of Harrison 's new songs , while author Andrew Grant Jackson views both Lennon and McCartney as the target of this sentiment .

The theme of " failed or betrayed friendship " , in Leng 's words , is most evident midway through the third verse , with the lines " You 've got me wondering how I lost your friendship / But I see it in your eyes " . Doggett interprets this statement as reflecting Harrison 's " decaying relationship " with McCartney at the time . Lennon too had been a friend of Harrison 's since school days , and Leng includes him as a source of Harrison 's " minibereavement " at the Beatles ' impending demise .

In the song 's two bridge sections , Leng notes the " psychological stress " implied by Harrison switching from a minor chord to its major voicing on the final word of lines such as " Though I 'm beside you , I can 't carry the blame for you " . Leng writes of this song @-@ wide message : " It presents his realization that he has to walk away and carry on with his own life . George Harrison is not his Beatle brothers ' keeper . "

The final verse urges an awareness of the consequences of chasing personal success , echoing what Greene views as the underlying message behind Harrison 's temporary departure from the Beatles in January 1969 ? that " [character] , not career , should govern their behavior " :

How high will you leap ?

Will you make enough for you to reap it ?

Only you arrive

At your own made end ...

Inglis writes that through Harrison 's repetition of " It 's you that decides " from earlier in the song , to serve here as his parting statement , " Run of the Mill " becomes " less of an accusation and more of a plea " . On " the most obvious level " , Inglis adds , the song " appears to be directed toward

McCartney " , as well as the divisions within the Beatles that reflect Apple 's precarious position in 1969 . In a January 2001 interview with Guitar World magazine , Harrison remarked of this period : " At that point in time , Paul couldn 't see beyond himself . He was on a roll , but ... in his mind , everything that was going on around him was just there to accompany him . He wasn 't sensitive to stepping on other people 's egos or feelings . "

Along with " Wah @-@ Wah " , " Isn 't It a Pity " and " Apple Scruffs " , Leng cites " Run of the Mill " as contributing to its parent album 's status in the Beatles ' history ? namely , that All Things Must Pass was " the first instalment of the inside story about being caught in that Kafkaesque chain of events " . Further Harrison compositions serving as episodes in what Leng calls " the Beatles soap opera " include " Sue Me , Sue You Blues " , " Who Can See It " and " Living in the Material World " .

= = Recording = =

McCartney 's refusal to have the release of his eponymous first solo album delayed to allow for the Beatles ' Let It Be album led to the band 's break @-@ up on 9 April 1970 . Late that month , Harrison visited Apple 's new offices at 1700 Broadway , New York , where he announced his intention to begin working with American producer Phil Spector on an album of his unused songs , some of which he had been stockpiling for up to four years . Noting the emotional disarray of Lennon , McCartney and Starr at this point , Doggett writes of their former bandmate : " Harrison retained a sense of objectivity . The youngest Beatle , he was now the group 's wisest spokesman . " In an interview for New York 's WPLJ Radio , Harrison remarked of McCartney 's objections to Klein running Apple : " The reality is that he 's outvoted , and we 're a partnership ... [L] ike in any other business or group , you have a vote , and he was outvoted three to one ... "

Harrison taped a solo demo of " Run of the Mill " at London 's Abbey Road Studios on 20 May . Once the full sessions were under way , from 26 May , Harrison gave the song a musical arrangement that Leng has likened to the " minimalist tradition " of the Band 's work in 1968 ? 69 , an influence that was apparent also in " All Things Must Pass " , " Behind That Locked Door " and other tracks on the album . The musicians accompanying Harrison on the session for " Run of the Mill " were all former members of Delaney & Bonnie and Friends , with whom he had toured briefly in December 1969 ? Jim Gordon (drums) , Carl Radle (bass) and Bobby Whitlock (harmonium) . In addition , ex @-@ Spooky Tooth Gary Wright played piano .

According to Leng 's study of All Things Must Pass , and to Whitlock 's recollection , Harrison played all of the song 's acoustic guitar parts . On what author Bruce Spizer notes as a " delicate recording " , these guitar lines accentuate the melody 's tumbling descents . Aside from Wright 's piano , the most prominent instrumentation on the recording is the trumpet and saxophone motif that opens and closes the song . Harrison vocalised the melody for this motif in his guide vocal on the basic track , before two other former Delaney & Bonnie sidemen , Jim Price and Bobby Keys , overdubbed the brass parts . This same motif later inspired Harrison 's song " Soft Touch " , written in the Virgin Islands in 1976 and issued on the George Harrison album three years later .

= = Release = =

" Run of the Mill " was released in late November 1970 as the final track on disc one of All Things Must Pass , in its triple LP format . The song followed " Let It Down " , a track featuring Spector 's full Wall of Sound production treatment , and so provided " the perfect antidote to the barrage of sound " , according to authors Chip Madinger and Mark Easter , who draw parallels with Harrison 's " Long , Long , Long " being sequenced to follow " Helter Skelter " on The Beatles (1968) .

Among Beatles biographers who have written of this period , Nicholas Schaffner described All Things Must Pass and Lennon 's concurrent Plastic Ono Band as having " more than compensated for the absence of the Beatles ' customary Yuletide offering " , while Robert Rodriguez refers to the end of 1970 as " the absolute nadir of Beatlemania " , with McCartney filing suit in Britain 's High Court to dissolve the band 's business partnership . Against this backdrop , Doggett writes , " Run of

the Mill " provided " the most compelling testimony to the recent past " , on an album that offered listeners " a teasing glimpse into an intimate world that had previously been off limits to the public " .

= = Reception and legacy = =

On release , Ben Gerson of Rolling Stone praised " Run of the Mill " as a " vintage Beatle " song , a composition of " poignance and McCartneyesque lyricism " , while Melody Maker 's Richard Williams acknowledged Harrison 's transformation from his previous , third @-@ Beatle status : " Harrison 's light has been hidden under the egos of McCartney and Lennon . From time to time there have been hints on several of their albums that he was more than he was being allowed to be . " Writing in 1977 , Nicholas Schaffner referred to " Run of the Mill " as " an essay on karma " and highlighted the message underpinning the song : " It 's you that decides ... your own made end " .

Simon Leng identifies a thematic link between it and other songs in the Harrison canon , notably " See Yourself " , from Thirty Three & 1 / 3 (1976) . Leng rates " Run of the Mill " " one of his most successful " compositions , through its acknowledgment that human relationships are " the other side of the coin " from the spiritual search represented in " My Sweet Lord " and " Hear Me Lord " . Ian Inglis writes that " Its rolling melody and warm vocals give it the texture of a love song , which , of course , it is : a love song to the Beatles . " In his book subtitled The Essential Songs of the Beatles ' Solo Careers , Andrew Grant Jackson concludes of " Run of the Mill " : " Such personal musings would be irrelevant to anyone but the biggest Beatle fans if Harrison hadn 't so artfully written the words to be open @-@ ended and applicable to anyone ? A touching work of maturity by a little brother who saw more clearly than the others , realizing that he loved them but it was time to move on . "

Speaking in February 2001 during promotion for the 30th anniversary reissue of All Things Must Pass , Harrison named " Run of the Mill " first among his three favourite tracks on the album , followed by " Isn 't It a Pity " and " Awaiting on You All " . The song particularly resonates with its composer 's widow , Olivia Harrison . " George singing was always beguiling to me " , she writes in her introduction to the posthumous edition of I , Me , Mine , " and countless times I was his audience of one . Run of the Mill was a song I often asked him to play , the lyrics so wise , especially the reminder that , ' Tomorrow when you rise , another day for you to realise me ' (' me ' being God) ... " Speaking to Mojo magazine in December 2011 , ten years after her husband 's death , Olivia Harrison named it as the song that most reminded her of Harrison . Music critic Tim Riley calls it " the best of the lot " on All Things Must Pass .

In his review of Harrison 's 2014 Apple reissues , Paul Trynka of Classic Rock cites " Run of the Mill " as " the perfect example " of how All Things Must Pass still " sounds fresh despite its familiarity " . Trynka continues : " Like many of Harrison 's songs , the opening and chords are sweet , reassuringly recognisable , but just as we settle down the melody skips away , aided by his trademark trick of a brief switch of time signature . It 's dazzling craftsmanship ? yet sweet and unforced . "

= = Alternative version = =

The 1970 demo version of " Run of the Mill " appears briefly in Martin Scorsese 's George Harrison : Living in the Material World documentary (2011) , playing over a scene where Harrison takes to the stage for one of his 1974 Dark Horse Tour concerts , before cutting to him and his wife on an empty beach at sunset . Although available since the 1990s on bootleg collections such as Beware of ABKCO ! , this solo demo was only issued officially in the UK in November 2011 , with the deluxe edition DVD release of the film . Six months later , it received worldwide release on the Early Takes : Volume 1 compilation . Noting Harrison 's usual practice of perfecting his guitar parts , compilation producer Giles Martin commented : " While that 's a very valid practice , I think it can sometimes inhibit the spirit of the recording ... [T] he appeal of this version to me is that it 's very rough and edgy . "

= = Personnel = =

The musicians who performed on " Run of the Mill " are believed to be as follows :

George Harrison ? vocals , acoustic guitars , backing vocals

Gary Wright ? piano

Bobby Whitlock ? harmonium

Carl Radle ? bass

Jim Gordon ? drums

Jim Price ? trumpets , horn arrangement

Bobby Keys ? saxophone