

= Scream / Childhood =

" Scream " / " Childhood " is the lead single from Michael Jackson 's ninth studio album , HIStory : Past , Present and Future , Book I. The A @-@ side of the single , " Scream " , is a duet with his younger sister Janet Jackson , while the corresponding B @-@ side , " Childhood " , is a solo piece . The single was released on May 31 , 1995 .

" Scream " is cited primarily as an aggressive , retaliatory song directed at the tabloid media and their coverage of the child sexual abuse accusations made against Michael Jackson in 1993 . " Scream " was written , composed and produced by Jimmy Jam , Terry Lewis , Michael Jackson and Janet Jackson ; Michael played many of the instruments . It incorporates elements of pop , R & B , electrorock , new jack swing , dance @-@ pop , and funk . Recording for Scream took place at the Hit Factory in New York City in October 1994 and at Flyte Tyme Studios in Edina , Minnesota in December 1994 . The song was leaked to radio stations early , despite Epic Records ' attempt to keep it off air until the official release date .

Generally well received amongst critics , it has been compared favorably to other accomplished pieces by Michael Jackson . It went on to be nominated for a Grammy Award and an American Music Award . The corresponding music video remains one of his most critically acclaimed pieces ; it won numerous MTV Video Music Awards and a Grammy . At a cost of \$ 7 million , it was listed in the Guinness World Records as the most expensive music video ever made ; however , director Mark Romanek has refuted the claim , saying that there were two other music videos from the same era which cost " millions more " than the video for " Scream " . The imagery in " Scream " has been replicated in several contemporary pieces , including " No Scrubs " (1999) by TLC , " Shawty Get Loose " (2008) by Lil Mama , " Stay the Night " (1999) by IMx , " Walkin ' on the Moon " (2009) by The @-@ Dream , and " I 'm Out " by Ciara featuring Nicki Minaj (2013) .

" Childhood " is an auto @-@ biographical song written and composed by Michael Jackson . The theme of the track centers around his difficult childhood experiences . It would become the main theme song for Free Willy 2 : The Adventure Home , continuing his association with the Free Willy series . The track appeared on several compilation albums , but was met with a mixed reception amongst critics . The song 's music video , which had little in common with the supporting film , has been critically praised . " Scream " / " Childhood " would become the first single in the 37 @-@ year history of Billboard to debut at number five on the Billboard Hot 100 , where it peaked . It was a worldwide hit , reaching the top five in the vast majority of major music markets . Michael performed " Scream " on his 1996 ? 97 HIStory World Tour . Following his death in 2009 , Janet performed the song on her 2011 Number Ones : Up Close and Personal World Tour as a tribute to him as well as on her 2015 @-@ 2016 Unbreakable World Tour .

= = " Scream " = =

= = = Background = = =

" Scream " is a song primarily directed at the tabloid press . As far back as the late 1980s , Jackson and the press had a difficult relationship . In 1986 , the tabloids ran a story claiming that Jackson slept in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber to slow the aging process ; he was pictured lying down in a glass box . When Jackson bought a pet chimpanzee called Bubbles , it was reported as evidence of increasing detachment from reality . It was reported that Jackson had offered to buy the bones of Joseph Merrick (the " elephant man ") . However , Jackson stated the story is untrue in both an interview with Oprah and an interview with Martin Bashir in Take Two - The Footage You Were Never Meant To See . Still , these stories inspired the pejorative nickname " Wacko Jacko " , which Jackson acquired the following year and would come to despise . He stopped leaking untruths to the press , so the media began making up their own stories .

In 1989 , Jackson released the song and music video " Leave Me Alone " , a song about his perceived victimization at the hands of the press . The video shows Jackson poking fun not only at

the press but also the situation he was in . In the video , there are images of shrines to his friend Elizabeth Taylor , newspapers with bizarre headlines , Jackson dancing with the bones of The Elephant Man , and an animated nose with a scalpel chasing it across the screen .

In 1993 , the relationship between Jackson and the press came to a head when he was accused of child sexual abuse . Although never charged with a crime , Jackson was subject to intense media scrutiny while the criminal investigation took place . Complaints about the coverage and media included using sensational headlines to draw in readers and viewers when the content itself did not support the headline , accepting stories of Jackson 's alleged criminal activity in return for money , accepting confidential , leaked material from the police investigation in return for money paid , deliberately using pictures of Jackson 's appearance at its worst , a lack of objectivity and using headlines that strongly implied Jackson 's guilt . At the time , Jackson said of the media reaction , " I will say I am particularly upset by the handling of the matter by the incredible , terrible mass media . At every opportunity , the media has dissected and manipulated these allegations to reach their own conclusions . "

The singer began taking painkillers , Valium , Xanax and Ativan to deal with the stress of the allegations made against him . Jackson 's health had deteriorated to the extent that he canceled the remainder of his tour and went into rehabilitation . Jackson booked the whole fourth floor of a clinic and was put on Valium IV to wean him from painkillers . A few months after the allegations became news , Jackson had lost approximately 10 lb (4 @. @ 5 kg) in weight and had stopped eating . The singer 's spokesperson told reporters that Jackson was " barely able to function adequately on an intellectual level " . While in the clinic , Jackson took part in group and one @-@ on @-@ one therapy sessions .

When Jackson left the U.S. to go into rehabilitation , the media showed him little sympathy . The Daily Mirror held a " Spot the Jacko " contest , offering readers a trip to Disney World if they could correctly predict where the entertainer would appear next . A Daily Express headline read , " Drug Treatment Star Faces Life on the Run " , while a News of the World headline accused Jackson of being a fugitive . These tabloids also falsely alleged that Jackson had traveled to Europe to have cosmetic surgery that would make him unrecognizable on his return . Geraldo Rivera set up a mock trial , with a jury made up of audience members , even though Jackson had not been charged with a crime .

" Scream " / " Childhood " and HIStory were Jackson 's first releases since the allegations , and the press was waiting to see if the album would sell well . One analyst for SoundScan expressed the opinion that the press were out of touch with the public when it came to Jackson ; the public liked him , while the press did not . He believed that " naysayers " in the media would be left surprised with the commercial reception to the HIStory campaign .

In the UK , on 24 June 1995 , " Scream (David Morales Remix) " was released as a single peaking at number 43 , dropping to number 57 a week later . It remained on the charts for only 2 weeks .

= = = Album booklet = = =

In the HIStory album booklet there is an image of Gottfried Helnwein 's 1981 watercolor " Das Lied / The Song " which is an image of a distressed child huddled in the corner of a room , screaming up at the ceiling . Jackson 's handwritten lyrics to " Scream " were scrawled on the wall beside the child . Towards the end of the booklet is a copy of a child 's letter to the President of the United States , Bill Clinton , asking him to end war , pollution , and to stop the negative press reports about Jackson .

= = = Production and music of " Scream " = = =

Janet Jackson wanted to be involved with the project as a show of sibling support . It was the first time they had worked together since 1982 , when Janet provided backing vocals on " P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing) " . Janet said that it was " very fun " working with her brother again and that seeing her brother 's work was " interesting " . " Scream " was written , composed and produced by the

Jackson siblings , with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis . It was the first time Michael Jackson had worked with Jam and Lewis , although Janet had worked with them successfully on numerous occasions . The album was created with the intention of following half R & B and half pop / rock themes , the same themes that brought Jackson success on his prior album , Dangerous . Jackson was credited for playing instruments such as keyboard , synthesizer , guitar , drums and percussion on the single and album .

In the song , Jackson tells the media to stop pressuring him and to stop misrepresenting the truth . Jon Pareles of The New York Times observed , " fear has turned to aggression . The music has polarized ; it 's either clipped , choppy and electronic or glossy and sumptuous , only occasionally trying to combine the two . Most of the time , Jackson sounds as if he 's singing through clenched teeth , spitting out words in defiance of any and all persecutors " . He believed that " Scream " had a similar sound to the music of Janet 's acclaimed Rhythm Nation . It was Michael Jackson 's first song that contained the word " fucking " in the lyrics " Stop pressuring me / Stop pressuring me / Stop fucking with me " ? which was thought of as an unusual choice for Jackson , considering his appeal with the younger audience . Other songs on HIStory contained words such as kike , shit and nigga . " Scream " incorporates elements of pop , R & B , hip @-@ hop , funk and rock . As of December 26 , 2013 , it 's been discovered that a sample of Janet Jackson 's song from her 1989 Rhythm Nation 1814 album " The Knowledge " was used in the production of the song .

= = = Leaking of " Scream " = = =

Two weeks before the official release of " Scream " , Jackson happened to hear it on a Los Angeles radio station . The station was playing " Scream " once an hour until served with a cease and desist order from Epic Records . Two other stations in Philadelphia also received similar orders . All involved denied that Epic leaked them the song early . The song had been a closely guarded secret by the label and most staff members were not allowed access to a copy .

Though they potentially faced legal action , the Los Angeles radio station programmer noted that , " some things are more important ... The record company was furious , lawyers were involved and the situation got hairy ... But on a release as big as Michael Jackson 's , there 's no way we 're going to wait if we receive a leak . It 's a once @-@ in @-@ a @-@ lifetime opportunity because his security is really insane . "

= = = Critical reaction to " Scream " = = =

Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic expressed the opinion that " Scream " , " improved on the slamming beats of his earlier single ' Jam , ' " a song that received critical acclaim in its own right , as the recipient of two Grammy nominations : Best R & B Vocal Performance and Best R & B Song . James Hunter of Rolling Stone noted that , " the excellent current single ' Scream ' or the first @-@ rate R & B ballad ' You Are Not Alone ' ? manage to link the incidents of Jackson 's infamous recent past to universal concepts like injustice or isolation . When he bases his music in the bluntness of hip @-@ hop , Jackson sketches funky scenarios denouncing greed , blanket unreliability and false accusation . " He went on to say of " Scream " and " Tabloid Junkie " , " [these] two adventurous Jam and Lewis thumpers work completely : Jackson 's slippery voice is caught in mammoth funk @-@ rock constructions . They 're reminiscent of Janet Jackson 's hits , in which Jam and Lewis allow space for lush vocal harmonies taken from the Triumph @-@ era Jacksons ; the choruses of ' Tabloid Junkie ' in particular sing out with quick @-@ voiced warnings about the failings of media truth . "

Patrick MacDonald of The Seattle Times called " Scream " the best song on the album . He continued , " The refrain of " Stop pressurin ' me ! " is compelling , and he spits out the lyrics with drama and purpose . The song has bite and infectious energy . " MacDonald did , however , consider the use of profanity unnecessary . Deepika Reddy of The Daily Collegian wrote , " The lyrics to the album 's debut single and video ' Scream ' are for the first time in Jackson 's convoluted career , painfully direct . He sings ' Stop pressuring me / Stop pressuring me / It makes me want to

=== Scream music video ===

In the video , Janet Jackson takes on a darker persona , previously unseen in her own music videos . Jim Farber of the New York Daily News described her as " Sporting a thick thatch of wig hair , and eyes darkened by coal @-@ black makeup ... sullen and arty ... Janet , however , never looked tougher , or more in control . " In the video , a sign appears with the logo of the song 's title . The scene then changes a spacecraft traveling past Earth before the camera zooms in inside . Then , the lights came on and reveal Michael and Janet inside a small hole . Suddenly , the spacecraft zooms out through the outer part of the galaxy , sending them screaming . In the first verse , Michael is seen in the room where he is floating on gravity . Then , Michael is shown in a room with thousands of guitars where he breaks one while Janet sings the next verse . Then , it shows Michael dancing on the wall while Janet looks at her nail before playing a game of tag . Then , it shows Michael and Janet in a room where they are using a remote control by changing pictures of Gregory Peck , art painting , statues , etc . Next , it shows both Michael and Janet in the media room where they are playing a video game which Michael wins . Then , Janet sports a skimpy bikini in some scenes while at the core of the craft , grabs at her breasts , gives the camera a middle finger and simulates male urination where Michael is shown taking controls into some kind of Observation . (In the out @-@ takes , there is a still color photograph of Michael also giving the camera a middle finger .) Meanwhile , Michael is seen in a white room while wearing a black robe where he is playing a Chinese person before screaming which breaks the glass above him . Then , Michael and Janet perform a dance breakdown . Then , it cuts back to the media room where Janet is dancing with Michael being seen on the television screen while Janet does the same thing with Michael . Then , Michael is seen playing a tennis game where he is using a robotic orb to break jars . The video has influences of Japanese sci @-@ fi Anime - several clips of the Zillion anime series and the movie Akira can be seen in the background screens . The version of the video included on Michael Jackson 's Vision is uncut and contains the " Stop fucking with me " lyric , which was censored in H1Story on Film , Volume II .

===== Reception and influence =====

The video premiered in the summer of 1995 , on MTV and BET and the next evening on ABC @-@ TV 's " Primetime Live " during Diane Sawyer 's interview with Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley . The interview was broadcast to approximately 64 million viewers . The video is one of Jackson 's most critically acclaimed pieces , Heather Phares of Allmusic described the video as a " stylish , interstellar clip . " James Hunter of Rolling Stone called it a contemporary video , " in which Michael and his sister Janet jump around like ' 90s fashion kids trapped in a spaceship stolen from a Barbarella film set . " Jim Farber called it a " supercool black @-@ and @-@ white clip ... The clip 's great allure is that neither of the siblings looks quite real . While the visuals hold barely any connection to the lyric , and seem to have no clear point , the weird look captivates . " He was of the opinion that while Michael Jackson outshines his sister in the vocals , it is Janet Jackson who gives the better performance in the music video .

In 1995 , *Scream* gained 11 MTV Video Music Award Nominations ? more than any other music video ? and won " Best Dance Video " , " Best Choreography " , and " Best Art Direction . " Reacting to this , Jackson stated that he was " very honored " , explaining that he had worked " very hard " and he was " very happy " with the reception up to that point . It was also given a Billboard Music Award for best Pop / Rock video . A year later , it won a Grammy for Best Music Video , Short Form ; shortly afterward Guinness World Records listed it as the most expensive music video ever made at a cost of \$ 7 million , although this was later refuted by the director . In 2001 , VH1 placed " *Scream* " at number nine on their list of the 100 greatest music videos .

In 1997 , " *Scream* " was remixed as " *Scream Louder (Flyte Tyme Remix)* " for Michael Jackson 's remix album *Blood on the Dance Floor : HIStory in the Mix* . The remix used elements from the Sly & The Family Stone song *Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Again)* . Another official remix was produced by Naughty By Nature and was called , " *Scream (Naughty Remix)* " and has a new urban R & B instrumental beat & a rap verse by Treach of Naughty By Nature .

" *Scream* " was a creative influence on other music videos such as the 1999 release of the award winning " *No Scrubs* " by TLC . This influence was also present on the 2008 release of " *Shawty Get Loose* " by Lil Mama and Chris Brown . Reacting to the comparisons made between the videos , Mama explained , " I feel honored , because that was one of the initial goals , and I feel that it was executed well . " She adding that the emulation was intentional and that Brown was the only logical choice to step into Michael Jackson 's role . Ciara 's music video for her single " *I 'm Out* " was heavily influenced by the video by referencing the all @-@ white scenery and attire .

===== MTV Video Music Awards tribute =====

In September 2009 , Janet Jackson performed " *Scream* " on the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards as part of a medley tribute to Michael Jackson , who died three months earlier . MTV General Manager Stephen Friedman stated " [t] his is not something that just came together ? we 've been in talks with [Janet] for a while ... We felt there was no one better than Janet to anchor it and send a really powerful message . " She worked with several world @-@ renowned choreographers , including Dave Scott , Cris Judd , Brian Friedman , Wade Robson , Tyce Diorio , Travis Payne , Jeri Slaughter , Laurie Ann Gibson , Mia Michaels and Tina Landon , with her personal creative director , Gil Duldulao , coordinating the performance . Gil Kaufman of MTV commented " [w] earing a black @-@ and @-@ white , skintight leather dress with matching pants , Janet busted some of her and Michael 's signature moves , flawlessly re @-@ creating her late brother 's steps as they were projected on the screen behind her . " Michael Slezak of Entertainment Weekly commented , " she worked that stage harder than an underpaid assistant doin ' overtime , and as tributes go , this was as energetic as it was heartfelt . "

===== " Childhood " =====

== Background ==

" Childhood " is a biographical reference to Jackson 's difficult years as a youngster , such as the relationship with his father Joseph and the pressures of being world famous from such a young age as the lead singer of The Jackson 5 . From a young age Jackson and his siblings were allegedly physically and emotionally abused by their father through incessant rehearsals , whippings and derogatory name calling . Jackson 's abuse as a child had affected him throughout his later life . In one altercation ? later recalled by Marlon Jackson ? Joseph held Michael Jackson upside down by one leg and " pummelled him over and over again with his hand , hitting him on his back and buttocks " . Joseph would allegedly often trip up or push his sons into walls . One night , while Jackson was asleep , Joseph climbed into his room through the bedroom window . Wearing a fright mask , he entered the room screaming and shouting . Joseph said he wanted to teach his children not to leave the window open when they went to sleep . For a number of years afterward , Jackson suffered nightmares about being kidnapped from his bedroom .

Although it had been reported for several years that Jackson had an abusive childhood , he first spoke openly about it in a 1993 interview with Oprah Winfrey . He grimaced when speaking of the childhood abuse at the hands of his father ; he stated he had missed out on much of his childhood , admitting that he often cried from loneliness . In the same interview , speaking of his father , Jackson said , " There were times when he 'd come to see me , I 'd get sick ... I 'd start to regurgitate . I 'm sorry ... Please don 't be mad at me ... But I do love him " . In Jackson 's other high profile interview Living with Michael Jackson (2003) , he covered his face with his hand and began crying when talking about his childhood abuse . Jackson recalled that Joseph sat in a chair as the group rehearsed , saying , " He had this belt in his hand . If you didn 't do it the right way , he would tear you up , really get you . It was bad . Real bad " . When Jackson received his Living Legend award ? presented to him by Janet Jackson ? at the 1993 Grammys , he said , " I don 't read all the things written about me , I wasn 't aware the world thought I was so weird and bizarre . But when you grow up like I did in front of 100 million people since the age of five , you 're automatically different ... My childhood was completely taken away from me . There was no Christmas , no birthdays . It was not a normal childhood , no normal pleasures of childhood . Those were exchanged for hard work , struggle and pain , and eventual material and professional success " .

Both of Jackson 's parents have denied the longstanding abuse allegations and Katherine acknowledges that although the whippings are viewed as child abuse by current generations , such disciplinary methods were normal back then . In an interview , Jackie , Tito , Jermaine and Marlon have also denied that their father is abusive and according to Jermaine , he is , second to Michael , one of the most misunderstood people .

== Album booklet ==

In the HIStory album booklet there is a drawing of Jackson as a child . He is huddled in a corner of the room and looks scared ; The electric cord of his microphone has snapped . On one corner wall are the lyrics to " Childhood " , the other wall shows Jackson 's signature .

== Production , music and reception ==

" Childhood " is a biographical song , written , produced and sung solely by Michael Jackson . The New York City 's children 's choir is credited for providing backing vocals on the track . It became the main theme song for the Free Willy 2 : The Adventure Home soundtrack , which was released by Jackson on his record label MJJ . Jackson had previously provided the main theme song for the first Free Willy film , his hit single " Will You Be There " , originally from Dangerous . Aside from HIStory and the Free Willy 2 : The Adventure Home soundtrack , " Childhood " appeared on compilations such as Movie Music : The Definitive Performances and Sony Music 100 Years : Soundtrack for a Century .

Jon Pareles described it as a " defense show ... Over tinkling keyboards and strings that could be sweeping across a cinemascope panorama , he croons [the lyrics] " . He described it as " creepy " yet " lushest " . In the song , Jackson states , " No one understands me ... They view it as such strange eccentricities , ' cause I keep kidding around " . He invokes " the painful youth I 've had " and asks the public to , " Try hard to love me " and , with a breaking voice , asks , " Have you seen my childhood ? " . James Hunter believed , " uncut Hollywood fluff like " Childhood " ... has zero point of view on itself ; its blend of rampaging ego and static orchestral pop is a Streisand @-@ size mistake " . Chris Willman of the Los Angeles Times described it as " dynamically enunciated reading and maudlin string arrangement directly invoke Streisand " . Tim Molloy , of the Associated Press , called it a sweet sounding pleading song . Patrick Macdonald of The Seattle Times described " Childhood " as " a sad , self @-@ pitying song , but quite moving and beautiful " . Taraborrelli observed that the song was not purely about his bad childhood years , but was also a plea for compassion and understanding . The song was covered by Italian singer Cristina D'Avena for her 2009 *Magia Di Natale* album as a tribute to Michael Jackson .

= = = " Childhood " music video = = =

The video is set in a forest ; Jackson , in scruffy clothes , sings " Childhood " while sitting on a tree stump . The camera moves up the trees into the night sky and flying airships travel overhead . On board the ships , children are seen playing a variety of games as they travel further away from Jackson , towards the moon . Other children appear in the forest undergrowth before floating up towards the airships , but Jackson remains seated on the tree stump . Although the concept of the video had little in common with the corresponding film , *Free Willy 2* , two of its actors @-@ Jason James Richter and Francis Capra @-@ appear in the video . Richter appears halfway through , leading the armada of airships . Capra appears near the end of the video alongside Jackson as he watches the airships above . Richter looks down and sees him and extends his arm to bring him up to the airship as Capra floats upward toward it . Erika Christensen and Jena Malone also appear in the video playing baseball . The video for " Childhood " is 4 : 27 minutes long . In the publication , Doug Pratt 's DVD : Movies , Television , Music , Art , Adult , and More ! , Pratt describes the video as " outstanding , a Chris Van Allsburg @-@ style vision of children in flying airships , crusading through a forest at night " .

= = Commercial reception of " Scream / Childhood " = =

" Scream / Childhood " was a worldwide hit . In the U.S. it was the first song in the 37 @-@ year history of Billboard to debut at number five ? where it peaked . The single was certified platinum by the RIAA and sold 700 @,@ 000 copies domestically . It reached number one in Italy , Spain and New Zealand , number two in Australia and Norway and number three in the UK . It became a top five hit in every major music market . A remix of " Scream " was also issued in the UK which charted at number 43 and in 2009 re @-@ entered the UK charts at number 70 .

= = Track listings = =

= = Charts = =

= = Cover versions = =

In 2011 , Patrick Stump of Fall Out Boy covered the song in an a cappella mash @-@ up tribute to Jackson along with Jackson 's " Billie Jean " , " Man in the Mirror " , " Thriller " and several other Jackson songs over pre @-@ recorded backing vocals .

In 2013 , by Christina Aguilera on *The Voice* .

"Scream" was also covered in Glee's Season 3 episode "Michael" with Michael's section sung by Artie and Janet's section sung by Mike Chang. The video was also re-created for the dream sequence.