

= Gone Too Soon =

" Gone Too Soon " is a ballad recorded and popularized by American musician Michael Jackson . It was written and composed by Larry Grossman and Buz Kohan . Dionne Warwick first performed the song in 1983 as a dedication to Janis Joplin and Karen Carpenter .

Jackson 's version of " Gone Too Soon " was dedicated to the memory of Jackson 's friend Ryan White , a teenager from Kokomo , Indiana who came to national attention , after being expelled from his school for having HIV / AIDS . This version was produced by Jackson and co @-@ produced by Bruce Swedien for Jackson 's eighth studio album , Dangerous (1991) . The song was also mixed by Swedien , and featured instrumentation by artists such as David Paich , Steve Porcaro , Michael Boddicker , Abraham Laboriel and Paulinho Da Costa .

The song was released on December 1 , 1993 , as the ninth and final single from the Dangerous album . Following its release ? on World AIDS Day of 1993 ? " Gone Too Soon " became a moderate chart success in several countries : France , Germany , The Netherlands , New Zealand , Switzerland and the UK . The song was released as a cassette single in the US , and became a hit in Zimbabwe , where it charted at number 3 . " Gone Too Soon " was not a significant critical success , as it received mixed reviews from music critics .

" Gone Too Soon " was promoted with a music video directed by Bill DiCicco , which showed footage of Jackson and White together , as well as scenes from the latter 's funeral . A live performance by Jackson at Bill Clinton 's inaugural celebration also served as a promotional platform , for both the song and AIDS @-@ related funding . " Gone Too Soon " later received more exposure , following the deaths of both Diana , Princess of Wales , and Jackson himself .

= = Background and production = =

Ryan White was an American teenager from Kokomo , Indiana who became a national poster child for HIV / AIDS in the United States after being expelled from school because of his infection . A hemophiliac , he became infected with HIV from a contaminated blood treatment and , when diagnosed in 1984 , was given six months to live . Though doctors said he posed no risk to other students , AIDS was poorly understood at the time , and when White tried to return to school , many parents and teachers in Kokomo rallied against his attendance . A lengthy legal battle with the school system ensued , and media coverage of the struggle made White into a national celebrity and spokesman for AIDS research and public education .

During this time , White was befriended by singer Michael Jackson . White 's mother Jeanne commented on the friendship , " It 's a really good relationship . They have a good time . [Michael Jackson] treats [Ryan White] like he 's not sick . And Ryan treats Michael like he 's not a celebrity . " The pop star bought the teenager a red Ford Mustang , and invited White and his mother to spend time at his Neverland Ranch in Santa Barbara County , California . Surprising his doctors , White lived five years longer than initially predicted and died in April 1990 , shortly before he would have completed high school . His funeral was attended by Jackson , as well as English musician Elton John , media personality Phil Donahue , First Lady of the United States Barbara Bush , and 1000 other mourners .

" Gone Too Soon " was written and composed by Larry Grossman and Buz Kohan and was originally performed by Dionne Warwick in February 1983 on a TV special as a tribute to many performers , including Janis Joplin and Karen Carpenter who had died days earlier . Later on the same day , Jackson called Kohan explaining he had wept while watching the performance and that he felt he wanted to record it some day .

Other projects took precedence for years , but Jackson ended up recording the song for his Dangerous album , in memory of White . The prelude to the song was composed , arranged and conducted by American musician Marty Paich . Bruce Swedien , who had worked extensively on Jackson 's Thriller , was drafted to record and mix the ballad . The music engineer also served as the co @-@ producer for " Gone Too Soon " , with Jackson producing the song . Prior to the production of the finalized version of " Gone Too Soon " , Jackson had recorded a demo version of

the song , which featured different vocals and a " perfect sunflower " lyric . To date , the demo has not received an official release , but that lyric was used in the song by Jackson when he sung it at the 1993 Presidential Gala for then President @-@ Elect Bill Clinton .

= = Release and reception = =

" Gone Too Soon " was released on December 1 , 1993 ? World AIDS Day ? as the ninth and final single from the Dangerous album . It charted in numerous countries outside of the US . In the UK singles chart , " Gone Too Soon " ? which featured an instrumental version on its B @-@ side ? reached number 33 , becoming Jackson 's ninth Top 40 hit from the one album (Dangerous) . He thus equalled his own record , set with Bad and its accompanying singles . Outside of the UK , in the African country of Zimbabwe , " Gone Too Soon " became a hit , charting at number 3 on their singles chart . The song reached number three in The Netherlands , number 32 in France , and number 33 in Switzerland . In Germany , " Gone Too Soon " peaked at number 45 .

The Toronto Star 's Peter Howell described the song as a " simply beautiful ode to youthful AIDS victim Ryan White " . The staff of the Kansas City Star alleged that " Gone Too Soon " made syrup seem " tart in comparison " . The Miami Herald noted that Jackson " rediscover [ed] " his falsetto voice on the track , while the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel compared his tenor to that featured on a Broadway ballad . Edna Gundersen of USA Today , reviewing the songs on Dangerous , offered the opinion that Jackson 's " heartfelt " delivery redeemed the " fairy @-@ tale cliches " of " Gone Too Soon " . She felt that the song was " shamelessly Disneyesque " . The Worcester Telegram Gazette added to the reviews , stating that " Gone Too Soon " was a " orchestra @-@ drenched ballad full of insipid little boy innocence " . Journalist David Browne , writing for Entertainment Weekly , claimed that the song " recasts the equally melodramatic Off the Wall hit " She 's Out of My Life " ; he noted that Jackson sobs during the finale of both songs .

= = Promotion = =

" Gone Too Soon " was promoted with a short music video directed by Bill DiCicco . The footage in the music video featured scenes of Jackson and White together , as well as brief coverage from White 's funeral . Home movies , donated by White 's mother Jeanne , were also shown in the short film . At the time of its creation , Jeanne White revealed that the video for " Gone Too Soon " would demonstrate how much Jackson cared for her ill son . The music video was later featured on Jackson 's 1993 VHS Dangerous - The Short Films . An alternate video was released a few months after Michael 's death , and was later released on Michael Jackson 's Vision .

The song was further promoted with a live performance of " Gone Too Soon " at President @-@ elect Bill Clinton 's inauguration celebration , An American Reunion : The 52nd Presidential Inaugural Gala . The pop star dedicated his performance to White , and used the occasion to plead with the incoming president for funding toward AIDS @-@ related research :

I would like to take a moment from this very public ceremony to speak of something very personal . It concerns a dear friend of mine who is no longer with us . His name is Ryan White . He was a hemophiliac who was diagnosed with the AIDS virus when he was eleven . He died shortly after turning eighteen , the very time most young people are beginning to explore life 's wonderful possibilities . My friend Ryan was a very bright , very brave , and very normal young man who never wanted to be a symbol or a spokesperson for a deadly disease . Over the years , I 've shared many silly , happy , and painful moments with Ryan and I was with him at the end of his brief but eventful journey . Ryan is gone and just as anyone who has lost a loved one to AIDS , I miss him deeply and constantly . He is gone , but I want his life to have meaning beyond his passing . It is my hope , President @-@ elect Clinton , that you and your administration commit the resources needed to eliminate this awful disease that took my friend , and ended so many promising lives before their time .

= = Cover versions = =

Babyface and Stevie Wonder duetted on the song during an MTV Unplugged performance in 1997 , with the former performing and dedicating the song to Jackson in June and July 2009 . American hip @-@ hop artist b @-@ Rabbit recorded a song entitled " Broken Hearts (R & B Remix) " that sampled Jackson 's vocals in early 2012 .

= = Death of Diana , Princess of Wales = =

Following the death of Diana in August 1997 , Jackson permitted " Gone Too Soon " to be included on a Diana commemorative album entitled Tribute . The proceeds from the sale of the album went to the Diana , Princess of Wales Memorial Fund .

= = Death of Michael Jackson = =

Michael Jackson died in June 2009 , after suffering a cardiac arrest . His memorial service was held on July 7 , 2009 , at the Staples Center in Los Angeles , preceded by a private family service at Forest Lawn Memorial Park 's Hall of Liberty . The event was reported to have been viewed by more than one billion people . At the memorial , R & B singer Usher performed " Gone Too Soon " as a tribute to the late singer . During the performance , the entertainer ? wearing dark sunglasses and a yellow rose pinned to the lapel of his jacket ? approached Jackson 's gold @-@ plated casket , which was in attendance . Usher placed his left hand upon the coffin , before completing the final lyric ? " gone too soon " ? through tears .

= = Personnel = =

Music by Larry Grossman

Lyrics by Buz Kohan

Produced by Michael Jackson

Co @-@ Produced by Bruce Swedien

Recorded and mixed by Bruce Swedien

Solo vocal by Michael Jackson

Rhythm arrangement by David Paich

Orchestra arranged and conducted by Marty Paich

David Paich ? keyboards

David Paich , Steve Porcaro and Michael Boddicker ? synthesizers

Abraham Laboriel ? bass

Paulinho Da Costa ? percussion

Prelude composed , arranged and conducted by Marty Paich

= = Track listing = =

CD single

" Gone Too Soon " ? 3 : 22

" Human Nature " ? 4 : 06

" She 's Out of My Life " ? 3 : 38

" Thriller " ? 5 : 57

CD promo

" Gone Too Soon " ? 3 : 22

" Gone Too Soon " (Instrumental) ? 3 : 22

= = Charts = =