

The Cranberries ‘Zombie’ Anti-Violence Protest Anthem Tops 1 Billion Views on YouTube

By Todd Spangler ▼

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UMe/Island Records

The music video for the Cranberries’ “Zombie,” the 1994 political protest song written and sung by the late Dolores O’Riordan, has surpassed 1 billion views on YouTube.

“Zombie” is the third video from the 1990s — and only the sixth from the 20th century — to reach the YouTube billion-views milestone. The others are Guns N’ Roses’ “November Rain” (1992); Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit” (1991); Guns N’ Roses “Sweet Child O’ Mine” (1987); A-ha’s “Take On Me” (1985); and Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975).

The Cranberries are the first Irish music group or artist to join YouTube’s 1 billion views club. To date in 2020, “Zombie” is averaging 178,000 daily views on YouTube. For the last several months, the band has been rallying fans to help push “Zombie” to the one-billion-views mark on YouTube, which it finally did on April 18.

The song was written by O’Riordan as a protest song after IRA bombings in northwest England’s Warrington in March 1993 killed two children and injured 56 others. “Zombie,” featuring her trademark yodel-esque vocals, was produced by longtime Cranberries collaborator Stephen Street (The Smiths, Blur).

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“Zombie” is from the band’s second album, “No Need to Argue,” and was released as a single in September 1994. The track was recorded at Dublin’s Windmill Lane Studios.

The “Zombie” music video was directed by Samuel Bayer, who previously helmed Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” Bayer shot original footage of Northern Ireland street scenes in Belfast with children playing war games during The Troubles, including now-famous political and historical murals. In the video, a gold-gilded O’Riordan stands before a giant cross wearing a crown of thorns surrounded by silver cherubs, with cutaway shots of the band performing outdoors.

When it premiered in fall of 1994, the music video was initially banned by the BBC over violent imagery including glimpses of children wielding guns. The “Zombie” official video, produced in pre-HD 4:3 aspect ratio, was uploaded to YouTube in June 2009.

O’Riordan died in January 2018, after which the other members of the Cranberries — drummer Fergal Lawler, guitarist Noel Hogan and bassist Mike Hogan — decided to disband. At the time of her death, she had been set to team with hard rock supergroup Bad Wolves on a “Zombie” remake. Bad Wolves subsequently released their own cover version and donated \$250,000 from sales of the song to O’Riordan’s family; the group’s video for “Zombie” has more than 300 million views on YouTube.

Watch the video for the Cranberries’ “Zombie”:



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Kinzi April 18, 2020 at 5:17 pm

It is not just an anti IRA song it is also anit British soldiers who occupied northern Ireland against the will of native Irish people.

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Jie April 18, 2020 at 8:06 am

Zombie !
Listen to this song over 25 years
And will continue on the next thousand years


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Congratulations The cranberries
Remembering Dolores.

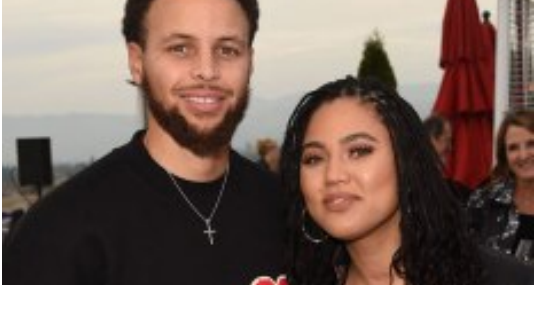
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