A black and white photograph of a woman wearing a dark hat, looking towards a light-colored horse. The woman is on the left, and the horse's head is on the right. The background is a soft, hazy landscape.

**"He's what the French call a *monstre sacré*,
a "holy monster," someone who is absolutely unique."**

— Gregory Peck

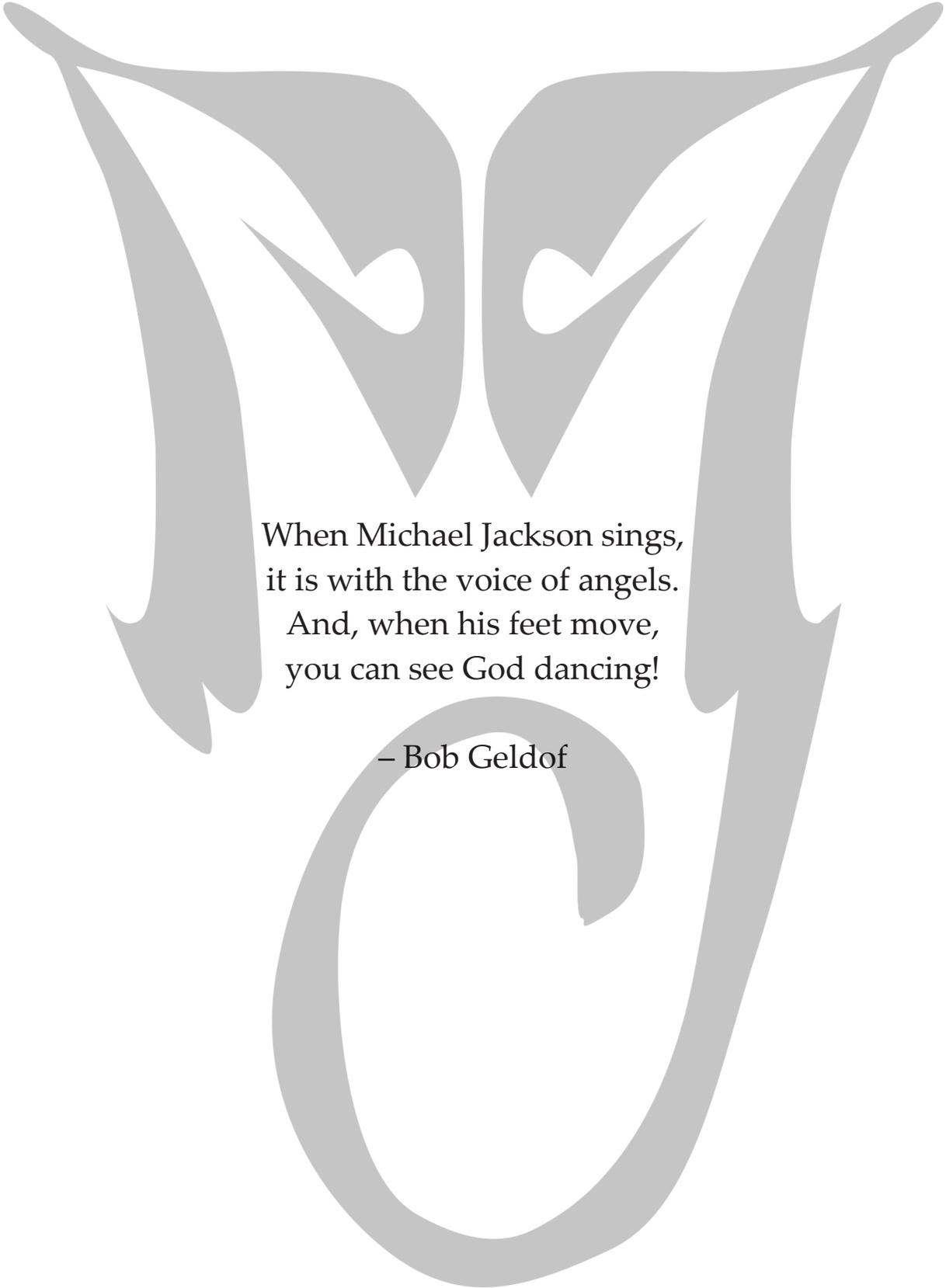
Sacred Monster

A Spiritual Biography

Reflections on Animals, Children, God, Music, and Nature

arranged by Michael-James B. Weaver

(Revised January 5th, 2024)



When Michael Jackson sings,
it is with the voice of angels.
And, when his feet move,
you can see God dancing!

– Bob Geldof

∞ *AN ABUSIVE RANCH* ∞

It was early winter, along the ridge of the Santa Ynez hills. It was the first time we could touch the horses that were rescued from an abusive ranch. It was our fundraising efforts, and Michael's anonymous generosity, that made it all possible. Michael touched one mare's face, he began to weep, and he spoke in a low voice, "You are safe now...safe."

– Robert Charles

∞ *ALL IN YOUR NAME* ∞

Michael Jackson and I were the dearest of friends, that's simply what it was. We gravitated towards the same kind of music, and we loved collaborating, and he was the easiest person to write with. The more we got to know each other, the more those ideas entwined, and it all came to this song *All In Your Name*. *All in Your Name* is, in fact, the message that Michael wanted to send out to all of his fans all over the world: that he did it all for them and for the pure love of music. I hope and pray that we all get to hear it in its entirety. This experience I will treasure forever.

– Barry Gibb

It touched Michael and I to see Bible verses blown up on signs with loving words of encouragement for him to stay strong during the difficult time he was facing. It was the strength he needed. There were huge crowds of people following his every move. It really did not faze him as it might have most people. One rule he enforced among his security staff was to “always be good to his fans.”

– Katherine Jackson

∞ *ANIMALS AND CHILDREN* ∞

My feelings about animals are very much like my feelings towards children. We, as human adults, are responsible to see that both children and animals are not abused or left in need or at risk. I hope I'm fulfilling my own obligation to both groups. I'm trying very hard.

How could you be mean or cruel to an animal? That's like being cruel to a small child.

I love animals because all they really want from you is love. Too bad that's even too much to ask for from some people.

– Michael Jackson

∞ APARTHEID ∞

Radio stations in South Africa were racially divided in the years prior to 1994, but Michael Jackson proved to be the only artist whose music was played in white pop stations and black R&B stations. It does not seem surprising now, but it was a very important thing when you think about how apartheid tried to keep everything about black and white societies separate.

– Duncan Gibbon

Mandela was so excited to meet Michael. He flew in all of his family especially. I was told by the publicists I had no time to shoot, but Michael kicked them all out and let me take my time. I didn't want a boring photo so I suggested they jump on each other's backs and hug one another. Liz Taylor said, "Harrison, you know I've got a bad back!" And Nelson said he was too old and joked he wanted to put his feet up instead. I tried to capture the joy of this incredible moment. That image was in something like 400 newspapers. It was real powerful. The next year, Michael went to Africa to shoot the *They Don't Care About Us* video. He would have done anything for Nelson. Michael and Liz gave his presidential campaign a very generous donation. I believe he and Nelson got on so well as Michael was like the Mandela of music, in the sense that he too broke down a lot of barriers. Remember, Michael was one of the first global black superstars.

– Thomas Hobbs

∞ ARCHITECTURE ∞

I love to do things for children and I try to imitate Jesus. (And, I am not saying, “I am Jesus.” I’m not saying that!) I’m trying to *imitate* Jesus in the fact that he said to be like children, to love children, to be as pure as children, and to make yourself as innocent and to see the world through eyes of wonderment—and the whole magical quality of it all, and I love that. And, we’ll have like a hundred bald headed children, they all have cancer, and they’re all running around. And they are enjoying themselves and it makes me cry happy tears that I was able to do this for them, you know. Makes me so pleased inside. [*One of the things that really impressed me the most is that there are—built inside the walls here—beds, beds for some of those sick children who come. And, what I realized when I saw this is that you have to be a person who really cares about children to build it into your architecture!*] Yes, yes. We have children that come who are—who, intravenously—they are very sick, bedridden. They can’t sit up, and these beds—they are hospital beds. You push a button, you go up or you go down, and they are able to watch. We have a magic show; we show the current films; there’s cartoons—anything, you know, anything so they can escape to that world of magic that they don’t have a chance to experience, the world I was deprived of when I was little.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *ART* ∞

I love to draw—pencil, ink pen—I love art. When I go on tour and visit museums in Holland, Germany or England—you know those huge paintings?—I’m just amazed. You don’t think a painter could do something like that. I can look at a piece of sculpture or a painting and totally lose myself in it.

– Michael Jackson

∞ AN ASSASSINATION ∞

I know Michael's heart. I know his mind and his soul. I'm not that insensitive—especially to him, or people I love. He was my friend. He was alone! He was totally alone. And he just—he needed help. Nothing in the world could have hurt him more. If it had been calculated, if they'd planned an assassination, they couldn't have done it any better. It almost—it almost broke his heart. [*She said she recognized a friend turning to painkillers for escape.*] He wasn't aware of what was happening: he was dulling his pain. But, it really frightened me because I have been there, and I know how easy it is to get there when you're in mental or physical pain. [*And, he knew right away that he had to deal with it, too?*] Not right away. Not right away...but, he knew.

– Elizabeth Taylor

∞ *AN AURA* ∞

I wholeheartedly believe that God gave Michael a mission and that was to bring joy, heal the lonely and the broken hearted and to provide for those less fortunate. He certainly helped me through my traumatic childhood.... He is the most humble, caring, sensitive, caring man you could ever imagine. What you hear about him from much of the media is either speculation or fabrication, but what you hear from those who have met him is absolutely the truth. Most will tell you, he has an aura that radiates warmth, love and tenderness, and most never ever forget such meetings. When meeting or even around Michael, there was certainly an aura. It was quite incredible. And it wasn't just when meeting him, it often continued afterwards too. I distinctly remember after a meeting with him in Tenerife, I just had this tremendous sense of love for everyone. I just wanted to love people. Michael hadn't spoken directly about this to me, but it was almost as if that aura around him had somehow rubbed off on me, if that makes sense? Even those fans who never met Michael often felt a deep connection with him. He had that capacity to draw you close, to mesmerize you with his love and compassion, but also with his aura, which he always acknowledged was from God Almighty Himself.

– Dee Pfeiffer

∞ *BABYSITTER* ∞

Michael Jackson a sweet, gentle twelve-year-old boy, was my son's babysitter before he became the Michael Jackson Moonwalker. This memory came back vividly last night as news of his death was telecast all over the world. This was in the summer of 1972, and my sons ranged from ages 3 to 8. We were spending our last trip together as a family at the Playboy Club in Miami, which I thought was a crazy place to go with 3 young children. My husband had announced he wanted a divorce because he was feeling crushed by the weight of a family of four, mortgage payments, a job he hated. It was hard to concentrate on the boys because I was weepy and shaky for most of that visit. My boys were fascinated by the Playboy bunnies with their fluffy tails. We were using the elevator going from our room to the pool or the dining room, I was surprised to see a young black boy acting as the elevator operator. In a very grown-up way, he asked each passenger, "What floor, please?" I was curious why he chose this seemingly boring task and I asked him why. Smiling shyly, he replied, "Something to do I guess." He was the only other child besides mine that I saw at the club. "Why are you staying here?" I asked. "My brothers and I are performing here," he answered. On one of our elevator trips he asked shyly, "Would you like me to take the boys to the kiddy pool? I would be happy to." So, for the next two days, Michel Jackson watched my kids at the kiddy pool while my husband and I sat at the edge of the adult pool, ending our marriage. When I glanced at Michael with the boys, he showed infinite patience with a sometimes squabbling six- and eight-year-old and countless times picking up my three-year-old who was always falling down in the water.

Michael was trying to show them how to swim, although I was not sure that he himself knew how. I do remember him laughing and having a wonderful time—a child playing with other younger children, away from the limelight. Knowing his background, that time must have been one of the few Michael had as a child that he was able to enjoy the company of other children without the spotlight trained on his every move. I interviewed more than eight hundred people in my career but one of the most moving glimpses into the life of a celebrity was a sweet, lonely twelve-year-old who spoke in a voice barely louder than a whisper, but someone who clearly loved being with children—and, for a few hours, was himself a child.

– Svea

∞ *BAD WORDS* ∞

When we were recording the melody based on *She's Out of My Life* at Cherokee Studios on Fairfax Boulevard, a block north of the Melrose District, Michael said no bad words. At that time, he behaved like that. The day came when we were going to record the song. It was about 1:00 p.m. in Studio 3 of the Cherokee Recording Studio. The musicians arrived at 5:00 p.m. We were rehearsing in the studio. Greg Phillinganes was playing Rhodes, perfectly, as usual. Quincy was busy at the piano making arrangements for the song. I was in the studio putting on my microphones and everything. Michael was sitting on the drums, singing with all his heart. Each time he reached the third verse, the line *Damned indecision and cursed pride*, he did not say the word *damn*. He was not able to sing, always stopped. When the rehearsal finished, Quincy quietly told him that he had to say the word *damn* to record the song. Michael said, "I know," and he did it.

– Bruce Swedien

∞ *TO BE LOVED* ∞

I am going to say something I have never said before, and this is the truth. I have no reason to lie to you, and God knows I am telling the truth. I think all my success and fame and I have wanted it, I have wanted it because I wanted to be loved. That's all. That's the real truth. I wanted people to love me, truly love me, because I never really felt loved. I said, "I know I have an ability. Maybe if I sharpened my craft, maybe people will love me more." I just wanted to be loved because I think it is very important to be loved and to tell people that you love them and to look in their eyes and say it.

I love what I do, and I would like people to love what I do and me. So that people understand what I really am. I just want to be loved everywhere I go, everywhere in the world because I love people of all races with all my heart, really.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THE BEATLES* ∞

When Michael Jackson broke our 12-year record, it was a mess, no one understood anything. We were the Beatles, no one could get close to us. John Lennon howled, wondering how a 12-year-old boy did what no artist could do. We were unbeatable, but when Michael broke our record, everything changed, John did not settle for it. So my reaction was fear. If he was 12 years old, he did what no artist in the world would do, imagine when he grew up, ours was going to be a mess in the music scene.

– Paul McCartney

∞ *THE BEST* ∞

Back at the hotel, I helped him remove his sweat-soaked clothes and saw his relaxation process, which always included a bath. In the meantime, I was carefully reviewing the huge amount of gifts he received from fans and managers. Teddy bears, champagne boxes, lots of oil paintings and statues. If he was in a good mood, he even talked to me a little through the door: “Bush, have you seen any museums? Have you been able to see your friends?” He always wanted to make sure that I was okay. After the shower, he put on his store-bought cotton pajamas or made by me and Dennis, and the chef brought the food which remained there because he was the worst eater on Earth. Adrenaline drove him crazy, so he would have no appetite. We put on the recording of the concert that had just ended and Michael started to review, almost immediately noticing the smallest detail of the imperfection. “What happened? The lights are not entirely correct. What happened there? What did I do wrong? Why does clothing do that?” At one of his first concert in Tokyo, during the *Bad* tour, Michael heard a ripping sound from *Billie Jean*. “Listen to that sound,” he said, pressing the back button. “Where does it come from?” And, I heard it too. Scratching. He wore the glove in the same hand that held the microphone. So, I decided to remove the sequins from the palm. Michael always wanted the best.

– Michael Bush

∞ *THE BEST DAY* ∞

My fondest memory here was one night when we had a houseful of bald-headed children. They all had cancer. And one little boy turned to me and said, "This is the best day of my life." You had to just hold back the tears.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A BETTER PLACE* ∞

I will never be sad if I leave this world, because I know I will be in a better place. The only thing I care about is that people stop thinking that I did something wrong. I love the kids, and disgusting lies almost killed me. When I die, all the money I have will go to my children and other children of the world.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *BILLIE JEAN* ∞

Michael would do many, many vocal takes. Usually, Quincy [Jones] would take a break and leave Michael and I to put the takes together. So, if Michael would do, maybe, 20 vocal takes, we'd have the best of all of them, all we had to do was pick which one he thought was the best. We were doing *Billie Jean* at Westlake Audio in L.A., and we did 91 vocal takes. The final take that went on the album was take two. That gives you an idea of Michael's abilities.

– Bruce Swedien

∞ *BLISS* ∞

When I am sad, I start reflecting on the good times to make me feel better. I do it in bed at night sometimes, when I get down on myself. I put the most wonderful thought in my head, some wonderful experience, and I feel a chemical reaction taking over in my body where I am actually there, and I love that. I get upset when some idiot—I mean worse than a Stooge—a complete idiot writes something stupid and so untrue and so unlike what happened at the event or something I was at. And, I get so angry, and I try not to be angry because I am hurting myself. And, I start thinking about me flying through the air with the wind in my face. I do it in Africa. I go way up high, and I am so happy up there and I am flying. I think it is the one of the most wonderful things I have ever discovered, and I love it. It's the freedom. It's the bliss. It's quintessential bliss, I think. It's the height of fun.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *BOND* ∞

I never had a childhood. When they're in pain, I feel their pain. And when they're in despair, I feel their despair. I have such concern about the plight and the state of our children today. If there was one day [a week] where kids could get with parents and bond, this would make such a difference.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *BOOM!* ∞

At one point, Michael Jackson had the flu or something. He would be sitting, hunched over in the corner with his head hanging in his hands, and waiting for us to get our act together with the lighting. He did not look well, and I thought we would have to cancel. But, when it came time to shoot, he pulled it together in such a remarkable way. We'd crank the music, and he would step up with such passion and energy and snap that—honestly—it would send chills up my spine. Where did this come from? Standing 0 feet away from this was inspirational. What feats are we capable of? We're griping about standing on our tired feet and lunch break, and this guy goes from zero to 100 with the flip of a switch.

– David Kellogg

I remember once while we were making a video—I think it was *Dirty Diana*. We were on stage, and Michael asked me, “Can I stay behind you? Everyone is looking at me.” Of course, no problem, but we're on stage, so when you start filming, I'll have to change. And he answered, “Yes, but when the song starts, everything changes.” And he did. As soon as the song started and I left the stage, it was like *Boom!* He has transformed himself, he has become Michael Jackson with “the power of music,” and what you see in today's video, is incredible.

– Sam Emerson

∞ *BREAKING HEARTS* ∞

You picture an image. And these people have known you for so long, buying your records. You're on their walls. They wake up watching you. They wake up thinking about you. You are totally in their minds. And, when they know you personally, they feel as if they have known you for a long time. But, I do not know them. You know, this is the painful part of show business: breaking hearts.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *CATALOG* ∞

His catalog revolves around love, around African-American pride, and around uplifting all people. He was trying to tell people we can do better as a human family.

– Eric Byrd

∞ CHARISMA ∞

At the end of an afternoon, in our third week of rehearsals, I was strumming the guitar completely focused, with my head down, eyes closed, listening carefully to everything that was happening. For no particular reason, I looked up when the music stopped playing and there he was ... Michael Jackson, at the rehearsal door, smiling and shaking his head splendidly at the music. I was never a guy dazzled by the stars, but this man had a completely different level of charisma. The eyes of everyone who was there jumped out, and they stopped playing when they realized he was there. Even former professionals, used to being close to big stars, were fascinated. "Oh God! Why did you stop playing?" Michael said with a laugh. "That was great!" So, here was the best of the dancers, the most famous—dominating MTV and Grammy—the best artist in the entire universe. He appeared to be six feet tall, slim but athletic, dressed casually in a brown jacket, like a band leader, with silver buttons, worn jeans and black shoes. It looked incredible! Remember that we were in the *Thriller* era. Many of the big stars I have worked with are often not fun. There was the case of Michael Jackson: The first thing that fascinated me was how easily he smiled and laughed.

– Gregg Wright

∞ CHILDREN ∞

Children are constantly encouraged to grow up faster, as if this period known as childhood is a burdensome stage to be endured and ushered through as swiftly as possible. Ours is a generation that has witnessed the abrogation of the parent/child covenant. Psychologists are publishing libraries of books detailing the destructive effects of denying one's children the unconditional love that is so necessary to the healthy development of their minds and character, and because of all the neglect, too many of our kids have to essentially raise themselves. They are growing up distant from their parents and grandparents and other family members as all around us the indestructible bond that once glued together the generations, unravels.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *CLASSICAL MUSIC* ∞

I love classical music. If I could collaborate with another artist, somebody that wasn't around anymore, it would be Claude Debussy. Ever since I was a little kid, I used to study composition, and it was Tchaikovsky that influenced me.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A COMMUNITY* ∞

We are Germans, we are Armenians, French, Italians, Russians, Americans, Asians, Africans and many other nationalities. We're Christians, Jewish, Muslims, Hindus. We're black, we're white. We are a community of so many differences. So complex, and yet so simple. We do not need to have war.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *COMPLICATED* ∞

Being a huge fan, I was—of course—extremely nervous to meet him. Michael was unquestionably eccentric, but to my surprise, he was warm, curious, amusing, and un-temperamental. I was particularly struck by how this legendary megastar became just another affectionate, playful, protective big brother whenever Janet was around. I took the opportunity to chat with him between takes and he always skewed the conversation away from himself. He asked about my childhood, my favorite films, if I knew how to swim, my religion, etc. My mother visited the set, and Michael immediately charmed her, asking her to hold his jacket while he filmed, giving her a warm hug and kiss as he left the set each day. My mom felt like she had a new best friend. The chance to experience the phenomenon of his gift from only a few feet away was the treat of a lifetime. Over those ten days of filming, I felt like I had the single greatest job in the world. And I think, perhaps, I actually did. I'm sorry his life became so horrendously complicated. As a person, he didn't actually seem that complicated to me.

– Mark Romanek

∞ CONSCIOUSNESS ∞

We met many times around the world. I met him once in South Africa, and we were sitting in this spacious place. He happened to be there and I happened to be there, and after we started talking we chatted about three hours. And, he had a list of books lined up all along the floor. And, I looked over and just said, “Mike, people are sending you stuff like that?” And he said, “No, that’s what I read.” I mean, he had everything: from the autobiography from Malcolm X, to *Eat to Live*, [Jiddu] Krishnamurti. I mean, like these exotic books that you would never imagine Michael was down with. And, we sat there for three hours man, choppin’ it up about all of this—from metaphysics to psychology, about how the black man is treated. I’m telling you, it was a trip. People don’t know about Mike on the real. Mike had a consciousness that could blow your mind. And he could recite things that would blow your mind as well—like the street corner stuff, straight up.

– Wesley Snipes

Anger and rage are the prelude to a shift in consciousness. Unless we feel rage at some of the inequities and injustices of our society, there is no hope for transformation.

– Michael Jackson

∞ CONNECTION ∞

We are all connected even though it doesn't look like we are, just like the ripples. We are happier when we feel that connection with others. It happened all the time at my concerts. There were thousands of people, sharing joy and love. There was a connection between all of us there. It was the *best* feeling ever! Music can do that. When people feel good, they are kind to one another, they help one another, they have the courage to follow their hearts and do what they love to do. Smiles work that way, too. They make a connection between people.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THE CREATIVE PROCESS* ∞

No one can talk about what the creative process is. It's created in space. It's God's work, not mine.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *DANCING* ∞

Dancing is really showing your emotions through bodily movement, and I think it's a wonderful thing to get out on the floor and just feel free and do what you want and let it come out. And when I dance—I mean, I really feel it: I just feel free.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *DARE* ∞

In a world filled with hate, we must still dare to hope. In a world filled with anger, we must still dare to comfort. In a world filled with despair, we must still dare to dream. And in a world filled with distrust, we must still dare to believe.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *DUSK* ∞

My God, it's dusk. The moon is out. The most beautiful part of the day. I can see some of the stars coming out. Very beautiful! Everything comes to life. The fireflies are in the trees, and everything's becoming magic. I would say it is my favorite part of the day: dawn and dusk. There's a certain magic about it. It does seem like everything that prey up on the night starts to come out—be it the creatures, be it the birds that return to their nests. I like dawn also. Some psychologists say that dusk, for a lot of creative people, you reach your alpha state subconsciously. You become more creative at certain parts of the day, but for me it can be anytime. I just like creating. It's no special time, but this is really magic to me because it's like a painting. It's very artistic. It's magic. <singing> *It's so wonderful!*

My favorite part of the day is dusk. It just gives you an unexplainable feeling; I thank God for that feeling.

– Michael Jackson

∞ EDUCATION ∞

Making *The Wiz* was an education for me on so many levels. As a recording artist, I already felt like an old pro, but the film world was completely new to me. I watched as closely as I could and learned a lot.

The greatest education in the world is watching the masters at work.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *EMPATHY* ∞

Michael never changed. Michael had incredible empathy, especially for children that were injured or sick or neglected. There were people that were hungry and homeless, and that was always in the front of his mind his whole life.

– David Nordahl

I was born with a soul that is way too sensitive for this cold and loveless world. I have always felt things deeply and differently than most people. That has always been my blessing and my curse.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *ENDEARING* ∞

She [childhood tutor Rose Fine] used to always rub my face and I never used to understand why. She used to say I had beautiful hands. And I used to say, “Why, don’t all hands look alike?” But, now I see what she means because now I do it to my kids. I rub their face like that because they are so sweet. I never understood why she did it to me. Then you grow up and you realize that it’s an endearing thing to do: to say, “I love you.”

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THE ESSENCE* ∞

It's strange that God doesn't mind expressing Himself/Herself in all the religions of the world, while people still cling to the notion that their way is the only right way. Whatever you try to say about God, someone will take offense, even if you say everyone's love of God is right for them. For me the form God takes is not the most important thing. What's most important is the essence. My songs and dances are outlines for Him to come in and fill. I hold out the form, She puts in the sweetness. I've looked up at the night sky and beheld the stars so intimately close, it was as if my grandmother had made them for me. "How rich, how sumptuous," I thought. In that moment, I saw God in His creation. I could as easily have seen Him in the beauty of a rainbow, the grace of a deer bounding through a meadow, the truth of a father's kiss. But for me the sweetest contact with God has no form. I close my eyes, look within, and enter a deep soft silence. The infinity of God's creation embraces me. We are one.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *EXTREMES* ∞

Michael was a very special person whose life was a combination of extremes. He enjoyed normal, down-to-earth things, but he also earned lifetime membership to a very exclusive club. His talent, tempered by lifelong discipline, reached the hearts of countless admirers and reshaped music for all time. He was denied his childhood; I think he spent the rest of his adult life trying to live it for the first time. He was a big kid!

– Michael Thomas

∞ *EYES* ∞

Michael had the most beautiful eyes I've ever photographed. They were large. They were expressive. They were deep. I don't mean that physically, it was a picture into his soul.

– Harrison Funk

∞ *FACTS* ∞

Michael always told me, “Attention to detail, LaVelle.” I spent more than half my age at his side and paid attention to the details of his actions and behavior. I have never seen anything inappropriate and the reason is simple: his heart was pure and genuine. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about false accusers who want money. For almost ten years, we have said, “Rest in peace,” but seemingly *rest* and *peace* have never been a choice for himself before and now after his death. Facts do not lie. People do.

– LaVelle Smith, Jr.

∞ A FAIRY TALE ∞

Michael Jackson spent much of the flight playing with his companions, a boy and a girl aged six years at the time. With them, the look of his eyes was different. It was sweeter. I closely followed what few saw and heard: a fairy tale in which he portrayed a little lion lost in the forest. The children were delighted with the roars and the faces during the story. Me too. It was better than any of those mega video clips of the star on TV. This was an almost exclusive clip. For me and for the children. The flight attendants, by the way, competed to serve him the food. Michael loved Guarana (a Brazilian soft drink) and ate everything from cheese, salami and ham, quail eggs, fried chicken, pineapple, grapes and *quindim* (a Brazilian dessert, it seems a little tart). As far as I can tell, I believe he ate about 12 *quindim*! But, who had the greatest privilege was the flight commander. Michael went to the booth and sang a cappella *Heal the World* when the plane was flying over Itaparica Island (near Salvador), and I was thinking I had already had the best times of my life before this!

– Marcelo Senna

∞ *FAMILY* ∞

By chance, I don't recognize the colors. So, I don't hire someone for the color of his skin, I hire him for his competence. As long as I can have the best, a musician can be of any race or religion. Racism is not my belief. I strongly expect that, one day, people of all colors will love each other as if they were part of one family.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *FANTASY* ∞

I love fairytales. I like fantasy a lot, science fiction. I like magic. I like to create magic. I love magic.

I love *E.T.* because it reminds me of me. Someone from another world coming down and you becoming friends with them and this person is, like, 800 years old and he's filling you with all kinds of wisdom and he can teach you to fly. That whole fantasy thing, which I think is great. I mean, who don't wanna fly?

– Michael Jackson

∞ FORGIVING ∞

At one point when we were working on *Thriller*, we were up for days—all of us were just completely exhausted, man. I was bound to snap at one point. I don't remember the exact reason, it might have been 'cause a harmony wasn't right or the lyrics were wrong, but Michael did something I didn't want, and I got pissed. And I mean pissed, man. And, in that moment, I just got up and stormed over to Michael and just screamed at him. I don't even remember what I said but I was just yelling at his face for not doing something right. After a second, I snapped out of it, and I looked over at Bruce and noticed he was looking right at Michael. I looked back at Michael... and it was weird, man, 'cause he was staring right at me, but he wasn't looking at me. Like he was seeing something else—his eyes were all fogged up. I stared at him for like 10 seconds, and I reached out and touched his shoulder to make sure he was okay, and he sort of snapped out of it and put his arms up, like I was gonna hit him. And, it was in that exact moment that I realized exactly what I did, and why he reacted like that, and I felt sick... We took a little break after, since Michael was a little off for the next few hours. Everything was okay, Michael got over it, though, by morning... He's so forgiving, you know? All I could think after that was, "Man, I hope this kid doesn't see me like he sees his father."

– Quincy Jones

∞ *FREE AND EQUAL* ∞

There are two things which the NAACP stands for which are the most important things in my life: *freedom* and *equality*. In every person, there is a secret song in their heart. It says, "I am free!" It sings, "I am One!" This is the natural feeling of every child: to be free as the wind, to be one with every other child. All the troubles in the world are caused by forgetting this feeling. And when I perform, my connection with people is to just remind me of that: *to be free* and *to be one*. In this spirit, the NAACP has done its cherished work. Thank you for having the faith to see that I share your work, for I deeply feel I do. I accept this award on behalf of the world's healing: when all our brothers and sisters will be as free and equal as we are today.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THE FUTURE* ∞

Forever, continue to love, heal and educate the children. The future shines on them.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *GENIUS* ∞

Michael was the world's greatest genius in the entertainment arena. And for people to take a genius who sees things that we don't see, and does things that we can't do, and criticize that genius for being eccentric or different, I don't find acceptable. He was one of the greatest geniuses in history, and different as far as I'm concerned.

– Thomas Mesereau

∞ GLOBAL WARMING ∞

I'm very concerned about the plight of the international, global warming phenomenon. I knew it was coming, but I wish they would have gotten people's interest sooner. But it's never too late. It's been described as a runaway train: if we don't stop it, we'll never get it back. So, we have to fix it now. That's what I was trying to do with *Earth Song*, *Heal the World*, *We are the World*, writing those songs to open up people's consciousness. I wish people would listen to every word.

– Michael Jackson

∞ GOALS ∞

I have always been kinda determined. I have always had a vision of things I have wanted to do and goals I have wanted to reach and nothing could stop me getting that. I am focused, and I know what I want to achieve, and I won't get side-tracked. And, even though I get down sometimes, I keep running the race of endurance to achieve those goals. It keeps me on track. I am dedicated.

I can't answer whether or not I like being famous, but I do love achieving goals. I love not only reaching a mark I've set for myself but exceeding it. I think it's so important to set goals for yourself. It gives you an idea of where you want to go and how you want to get there. If you don't aim for something, you'll never know whether you could have hit the mark.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *GOD* ∞

I don't mean to sound weird, but I really believe that children are God. I think that they are the purest form of the creation of God. When a child steps into a room, I am totally changed. I feel their energy, their presence, and their spirit. I think we have to remember it is easy for adults and parents to push them aside and not to pay attention to them. But, I think they have so much to say and we don't listen, we don't feel. It's almost hard to put into words.

– Michael Jackson

∞ GOD HAS NOT YET GIVEN UP ON MAN ∞

[I notice on this trip that you made a special effort to visit children.] I love children, as you can see. And babies. [And animals.] Well, there's a certain sense that animals and children have that gives me a certain creative juice, a certain force that later on in adulthood is kind of lost because of the conditioning that happens in the world. A great poet said once, "When I see children, I see that God has not yet given up on man." An Indian poet from India said that, and his name is Tagore. The innocence of children represents to me the source of infinite creativity. That is the potential of every human being. But by the time you are an adult, you're conditioned; you're so conditioned by the things about you—and it goes. *Love*. Children are loving, they don't gossip, they don't complain, they're just open-hearted. They're ready for you. They don't judge. They don't see things by way of color. They're very child-like. That's the problem with adults: they lose that child-like quality. And that's the level of inspiration that's so needed and is so important for creating and writing songs and for a sculptor, a poet or a novelist. It's that same kind of innocence, that same level of consciousness, that you create from. And kids have it. I feel it right away from animals and children and nature. Of course. And when I'm on stage, I can't perform if I don't have that kind of ping pong with the crowd. You know the kind of cause and effect action, reaction. Because I play off of them. They're really feeding me and I'm just acting from their energy.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *GOD'S SMILE* ∞

I've traveled the world over 8 times. I do as many hospitals and orphanages as I do concerts. But, of course, it's not covered (by the press). That's not why I do it, for coverage. I do it because it's from my heart. And there are so many children in the city who haven't seen the mountains, who haven't been on a carousel, who haven't pet a horse or a llama—never seen them. So, if I can open my gates and see that bliss—an explosion of screaming laughter from the children and they run on the rides—I say, “Thank you, God.” I feel I've won God's smile of approval, because I'm doing something that brings joy and happiness to other people.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *GOOD NEWS* ∞

What I usually do on my off days, I visit as many hospitals as I do concerts. I visit as many orphanages as I do concerts. But, because it is good news, the press doesn't cover it because they want bad news. But, I do it from my heart.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A GOOD PERSON* ∞

He was just so genuine and so warm and so caring. All of the time I knew Michael, almost 20 years, I never ever heard him raise his voice at anybody. Never happened. He was just such a good person. Just a really deep-down good person.

– David Nordahl

∞ *GRATITUDE* ∞

Gratitude is what defines the humanity of the human being. And, gratitude is what we should now have today for that young American black boy. His name was Michael Jackson, someone I am privileged to call my friend, somebody who often stood alone for the children of the world, for the destitute, for the victims of disease and injustice. Michael was very troubled by the suffering he saw in the world and even more to the indifference to it. His first words to me when we met were, “Thank you so much for helping the people of Africa.” There were no airs and graces, no pomp and circumstance, and his only concern was for the lives of other people who lived on a different continent than the one in which either of us were born. He planned to hold a great concert in Rwanda and we would fly there together to see his great friend, Nelson Mandela. Sadly, these events were not to happen and the world lost one of its greatest humanitarians.

– Elie Wiesel

∞ *HEART* ∞

I spent 32 years with Michael.... I vocalized him two hours a day six days a week. Number one: he was a very sweet man, he was an honest man, and he was not the kind of man who would ever molest children. That, I can promise you. But, he loved everyone, and he really in many ways spent a lot of money to help people in need. And, I watched him do it time and time again. People that needed help desperately... and who would show up? Michael, with his check-book. Nobody knows that. They only think about crazy things that would cause some sort of a sensation. But Michael had a heart of gold.

– Seth Riggs

∞ *THE HEAVENS* ∞

Sometimes I feel guilty putting my name on songs—*written by Michael Jackson*—because it's as if the heavens have done it already.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *HELP* ∞

You know, sometimes I feel so guilty when I have dinner or breakfast because I realise how so many people don't have those simple things that we so much take for granted. People, they sit at the table and they pray and all that, which is beautiful, but to do something is the thing. You have to act. I think it's important to help out as much as you can.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *HERITAGE* ∞

I'm proud of my heritage. I'm proud of it. I'm proud to be black. I'm honored to be black, and I just hope one day they will be fair in portraying me the way I really, really am: just a loving, peaceful guy wanting to make wonderful, unprecedented entertainment and songs and music and film, for the world. That's all I want to do. I'm no threat. I just want to do that. That's what I want to do. To bring joy to the world.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *HISTORY* ∞

I remember going to the *Bad* concert, his first solo world tour. Amazing... the power, the energy! The whole stadium got into a trance, like a religious experience. It was normal that people would cry and faint, often people all cried at the same time. But, mostly it was joy and love. Same with the *Dangerous* world tour and the *HIStory* world tour concerts. You could feel his love, he really loved us all. He unified people. All over the world. He inspired people with his humanitarian efforts. Countries were honored by his visits. Presidents, kings and queens wanted to shake his hand. Entire cities stopped functioning when he would drive by in a car and just wave. Never mind the media junk and Sony attacks, he never lost his magic! It is all stored in his music, short films, and the 2 books he wrote. He changed history. *The Dream Continues...* Michael Jackson is forever!

– Rif Flame

∞ *HONESTY PERSONIFIED* ∞

Michael Jackson is, indeed, an international favorite for all ages, an incredible force of incredible energy. In the art of music, he is a pacesetter for quality of production, in the vanguard for high standards of entertainment. What makes Michael more unique may be the fact that all of his accomplishments, his rewards, have not altered his sensitivity and concern for the welfare of others, or his intense caring and love for his family and friends, and especially all the children of the world over. He is filled with deep emotions that create an unearthly, special, innocent, childlike, wise man that is Michael Jackson. He is so giving of himself that, at times, he leaves very little to protect that beautiful inner core that is the essence of him. I think Michael appeals to the child in all of us. He has the quality of innocence that we would all like to obtain or have kept. I think Michael is like litmus paper. He is always trying to learn. He has one of the sharpest wits, he is intelligent, and he is cunning—that is a strange word to use about him, because it implies deviousness and he is one of the least devious people I have ever met in my life. Michael is highly intelligent, shrewd, intuitive, understanding, sympathetic, and generous to almost a fault of himself. He is honesty personified—painfully honest—and vulnerable to the point of pain.

– Elizabeth Taylor

∞ *HUMAN* ∞

It is often said that people did not understand Michael because he was too different. However, strange as it may seem, many did not understand him because he was too human. A billboard of emotions—big and elegant—and, at the same time, a man with a crystal soul.

– Pamela Lopes

∞ *A HUMANITARIAN* ∞

I could not resist to work with John Singleton, Michael Jackson, Eddie Murphy, Magic Johnson. There's no way I was going to miss that opportunity. Michael was very endearing. He had a great sense of humor, and he could make anybody feel comfortable around him. So, I didn't understand what people were saying about Michael: that he wants to be alone and all that. I didn't understand it. But, what inspires me about Michael is his humanitarian efforts. As a humanitarian, we don't have a better spokesperson for *Heal The World* than Michael. I hear you guys talking about Michael as a child when he was growing up; I think he understands very well about children.

– Iman Bowie

∞ *HUMANITY* ∞

It is not in Michael Jackson's musical artistry that his foremost greatness consists, but it is in fact in his beautiful humanity. His music is only just one manifestation and expression of that humanity. Most eulogies have had it all backwards. Michael's greatest legacy is his loving character and the lessons it teaches us—through his ultimately tragic life—about the true face of an often brutal and ugly world. In Michael Jackson, we see innocence and purity rarely seen in an adult. Jackson's "childlikeness" is perplexing to many people, but it is precisely this trait that sets him apart from an adult world that has learned so effectively to be cold and calculated, smart and shrewd, proper and professional. Adults seeking to improve themselves would need only to emulate Michael and become more childlike.

– Filip Panusz

∞ *HUMBLE* ∞

Michael was a happy-go-lucky kind of person. I didn't have to teach my son lessons about being humble during his lifelong fame; it seemed to come naturally to him. I remember telling Michael as a boy that performing on stage was a job and that it did not make him better than anyone else. It's possible that my message resonated. Even still, his humility often amazed me.

– Katherine Jackson

During the meals I've had with him, he did pray silently. When he prayed out loud, it was always to God. We would talk about God and grace and humility a lot. One day, MJ and I were working on some new music, and during a break we started talking about the name *Michael*. He said "Hey, Bearden! Do you know what our name means?" I didn't know. He said it means "most like God." And then he said to me, "We can't be big-headed about it. We have to be humble or God could take our gifts away. Promise me you'll be humble!"

– Michael Bearden

∞ *I LOVE YOU* ∞

He had a great sense of humor. He was a kidder who loved being kidded... He was the epitome of love. I don't know of anyone I have ever met who has loved more than Michael... When Michael said, "I love you," you felt it. He was that way his entire life.

This man had more love in his bones than anybody I know. I've heard about him and I've said about him that if you look up *love* in a dictionary, you should see a picture of Michael Jackson. He was the most loving, most kind, most generous, sweet, charismatic guy—who loved to play practical jokes at people. I become speechless when I talk about Michael because I love this guy so much.

– John Bähler

∞ *IMMORTALITY* ∞

Who wants mortality? Everybody wants immortality. I always want to do music that inspires or influences another generation. You want what you create to live! Be it sculpture or a painting or music or a composition. Like Michelangelo said, “I know the creator will go. But his work survives. That is why, to escape death, I attempt to bind my soul to my work.” That’s how I feel. I give my all in my work because I want it to just live, and just give all that I have.

Great music, and great melodies are immortal. We still listen to Mozart today, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff – any of the greats. It’s like a great piece of sculpture, or a great painting – it’s forever.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *IMPORTANT* ∞

Michael spent a third of a billion dollars on helping children, paying for surgeries, building hospital wings, orphanages, a burn center and on and on and on. The good things he did he would never talk about them. You'd always have to hear it from people who were around him, because Michael always thought if you did a charitable act and then you talked about it or bragged about it or something, all of the good you're trying to do, that it negated all of that. So, he never would talk about those things.... I asked him, "Michael, how can you do that? How can you spend the time with these children who are dying and then go from that, on stage and give that kind of performance?" He said, "How could I not? If these children want to see me. I know I'm not important, but Michael Jackson the superstar is, and if I can make a child live an extra minute or an hour or a day or a month, then wouldn't that be worth it?" Michael was always that way. If he would get a call from somebody and a child was dying, he would get on a plane and go, and he would tell them, "I'm going to be back in 2 weeks to see you," and a lot of times he extended little kids' lives that way. It gave them something to look forward to down the line. You have to admire something like that.

– David Nordahl

∞ INFINITY ∞

Stop reading the bullshit sensational headlines and understand why those who love him know more about him than any expert or journalist who claims to have researched his life. These journalists and experts do not know Michael Jackson. Michael Jackson was the most amazing person I have ever met in my life. He was able to look at the tip of a finger, he was able to look at the smallest things, he was able to look at a fly, and he was able to see infinity in it. And, he was profoundly kind to his fellow men. He felt that God had given him a wonderful gift that he should share. He had the ability to see absolutely amazing things in almost everything he looked at, and he considered it his duty to convey that experience to everyone he could—you, me, everyone on this planet. And, he devoted his entire life to fulfilling that obligation. He was above anything I've ever imagined in my life. And remember, I've worked with Bette Midler, Bob Marley, AC/DC, Aerosmith, KISS, Queen, Billy Joel, Paul Simon and other amazing people. But, even if you add five of those people, you won't have a single Michael Jackson.

– Howard Bloom

∞ *INNOCENCE* ∞

If you really want to know what I respected most about him, it was his ability to love people unconditionally. He loved all people. It didn't matter what race, creed, color, or gender. They tried to run this guy under the bus. What people failed to realize is: he was a child trapped in an adult's body. And, it was not a bad thing. Children are innocent to the world. He kept that love and that innocence within him. He was a simple, humble guy who loved people the way God said we should love each other. For all the money he had, he was a very humble person.

– George Mayers

∞ AN INSPIRATION ∞

My daughter, Angela, was in hospital with head injuries after being hit by a car. One day, we were told by the nurses that Michael Jackson was coming to visit. We had to keep it a secret, so the hospital wasn't overwhelmed with fans. There was a big flurry, as his assistants handed out T-shirts and signed copies of his *Bad* album to everyone on the ward. Then he just walked around and talked to the patients... I said hello. He said he was pleased to meet me. I was gobsmacked. He was very gentle and seemed shy. I got the sense he had a deep love for children, especially those who'd been hurt. Then he crouched down and said "Hello, Angela." She couldn't talk, because she'd just come out of a coma, but she started smiling. After that day, she started to get better. I think of him as an inspiration. We'd been having a terrible time: Angela was in hospital and I'd been ringing Lifeline to keep myself together, but he was a total inspiration for the whole ward. I thought, "Thank God for sending him." He just had a presence about him—this great empathy with people who needed to get better. Now Angela is 25, at university and full of life. There was another boy on the ward who was about 15 and was a huge fan. After Michael's visit, he started getting better too. His mom thought it was a miracle. I believe many of the children got better after meeting him. I think people should know about this side of Michael. I've never believed he was anything but a good person.

– Helen Darlington

∞ *INSIDE ME* ∞

Those problems aren't "out there," not really. I feel them inside me. A child crying in Ethiopia, a gull struggling pathetically in an oil spill, a mountain gorilla being mercilessly hunted, a teenage soldier trembling with terror when he hears the planes fly over. Aren't these happening to me when I see and hear about them?

– Michael Jackson

∞ AN INSTRUMENT ∞

I wrote *Will You Be There* at my house, Neverland, in California. I didn't think about it hard. That's why it's hard to take credit for the songs I write because I just always feel that it's done from above. I feel fortunate to be an instrument through which music flows. I'm just the source through which it comes. I can't take credit for it because it's God's work. He is using me as a messenger.

I love to write songs. It's one of my favorite things to do. It's very spiritual. It's a connection. I'm just a source through which it comes. I'm inspired by a lot of things but it's done in the heavens. I listen to the music, and I just create from there.

If I sat down at the piano and tried to write my best song, nothing would happen. Something from above must say, "This is the right time. This is my gift to you, and this is the moment I want you to receive it." I remember when I wrote *Billie Jean*. I was driving my car on Ventura Boulevard. All I said to myself was, "I want to write a song that has a good bass line," and so I just kind of let myself go.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *INTERACTION* ∞

Fame can be imprisoning. But, the best part of being Michael Jackson is that I know I can interact with millions of people, and—in that interaction—we exchange something...which is *love*. It is exhilarating. It is magic.

– Michael Jackson

∞ JOY ∞

Michael laughed a lot. He was the one who laughed the loudest. We always had a “family day.” We got the (game) Pictionary right away, and it was boys against girls. It was super fun. Michael had a laugh that you even heard when he was down the hall. And, that’s one of the things I miss most in my life: his laugh. He was synonymous with joy. I have so many wonderful memories of that time, and at the same time, I know I’m clinging to them. None of this will come back. This saddens me. But, I hope that I can show how wonderful and magical this man was, and how he helped, saved and inspired so many people.

– Taj Jackson

∞ *LAUGHED AT* ∞

The ridiculous, the criticisms, the provocations are part of the game. There will always be negative words that want to stop you, especially if they come from people who have done nothing. Some of the greatest men who left a mark in this world have been ridiculed: “You are not going anywhere.” They laughed at the Wright brothers, laughed at Thomas Edison, laughed at Walt Disney, made fun of Henry Ford and said he was ignorant, had no diploma and dropped out of school. Disney dropped out of school.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *TO LIVE* ∞

To live is to be musical, starting with the blood dancing in your veins. Everything living has a rhythm. Do you feel your music?

– Michael Jackson

∞ *LOVE* ∞

In every generation, there are a handful of people who come into this world equipped with the ability to change it for the better because of their heightened sense of awareness about the power of love. Those people understand love, not as a feeling, but as a state of being, a way of relating to the world. They have a certain light about them; a way of living that encompasses being kind, caring, compassionate and empathic. Through their ability to connect to love, they have the potential to heal the world. Michael Jackson was one of them.

– Linda Higgins

Love is my message.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *MAGIC* ∞

Michael Jackson had a special relationship with the principles of Real Magic, the idea of “creating miracles in everyday life.” With his enormous musical talent, he created a body of work that brought joy to millions. My children and I spent five very happy days with him at Neverland in 1991. He wanted to talk to me about “real magic,” but the truth is, he already had the magic—the power he needed to dream and create and give. Michael was dedicated to ending world hunger and helped create the 1985 *We Are the World* celebrity sing-along that brought together some of the biggest names in popular music to raise funds for famine relief in Africa. I didn’t have to explain “real magic” to Michael because he was already a spiritual being, already kind, loving, and ready to use his musical gift to create miracles. Along with millions of people around the world, I say, “Thank you, Michael, for sharing your amazing talent to lift our spirits. I’ll remember you as a beautiful human being with a heart as big as the sky. Namaste.”

– Wayne Dyer

∞ *MAKING PEOPLE HAPPY* ∞

Music was always natural for me. When I was little, any music would start, they couldn't tie me down. It's just a natural instinct. I have always loved show business and always enjoyed making people happy, and I would do it all again. But, I have also had to live my whole life in a fishbowl. I have every disguise I can think of. My dream is to just go anyplace, like Morph from *X-Men*, so nobody would know who I am. There have been many lies written about me and I want people to know that unless they hear it from me, don't believe it. I'm just a person who wants to be honest and do good, make people happy through the talent that God has given me. To my fans in every corner of the Earth, every nationality, every race, every language: I love you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for your love and support.

I always try to write songs with a positive message in them to convey hope to people.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A MANTRA* ∞

I'm not one to sit back and say, "Oh, I feel bad for what happened to them." I want the whole world to sing *What More Can I Give*, to bring us together as a world, because a song is a mantra, something you repeat over and over. And we need peace, we need giving, we need love, we need unity.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THE MEANING OF LIFE* ∞

The meaning of life is contained in every single expression of life. It is present in the infinity of forms and phenomena that exist in all of creation.

My greatest accomplishment, my greatest joy are my children. This is what life is all about. This is what love is all about.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *MELODY* ∞

When children listen to music, they don't just listen. They melt into the melody and flow with the rhythm. Something inside starts to unfold its wings—soon the child and the music are one.

– Michael Jackson

He was so hands on. I'm talking about from the high hat to everything. The sound quality was so important to him. He looked at everything under a microscope, like, "The middle frequency is too much." He was very technical. He used to always say, "Melody is king," so he really focused in on melody.

– Rodney Jerkins

∞ *A METEOR* ∞

I think it was very hard for Michael to express anger. He was, I have to say, one of the most polite people I have ever met in my life. I never heard Michael say a swear word, even when he was upset. He had the most beautiful manners. And, I think music was really the only way in which his passion could come through unguarded. It was immense. He was on fire as a performer—I've never seen a talent like it. I think, actually, there was a lot of the otherworldly in Michael. He had this talent that I've never encountered before, and I've seen a lot of extraordinary people perform. He was, I think, very misunderstood. I never believed any of the allegations or insinuations against him. We had lunch together about a month ago, and he talked about his ordeal. He felt like he had really been put through the ringer. He said they wanted blood. I felt so bad for him, and I felt that he was really broken-hearted from what had been done. He was a meteor: his flame burned incredibly bright, and not for long but mightily.

– Angelica Huston

∞ *A MINUTE OF JOY* ∞

There's a reason why God made the sunset red or purple or green. It's beautiful to look at. It's a minute of joy. There's a reason why we see rainbows after a rain, or a forest where the deer come out. That's wonder. That's escapism. It touches your heart, and there's no danger in that... Escapism and wonder is influence. It makes you feel good, and that allows you to do things. You just keep on moving ahead, and you say, "God, is this wonderful. I do appreciate it."

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A MOTORCYCLE* ∞

When we were in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), we went to an institute for handicapped children. There was a boy who had neither legs nor arms. Curiously, Michael asked the director what the child wanted the most. She replied, "You will find this odd, but he would like to have a motorcycle. But he has neither arms nor legs." Michael remained silent and smiled. Before leaving, he contacted his lawyer, ordered a motorbike suitable for the boy, and arranged to provide him with prosthetic arms and legs. He also paid a professional to teach the boy to ride a motorcycle.

– Dona Remi

∞ *NAKED WE COME INTO THE WORLD* ∞

Pecky,

I very seldom write letters. But in this moving occasion I couldn't help myself. I want to thank you for putting the effort forward to capture the magic and excitement of the people of the world. What you do is a very personal and powerful medium to me. It is the art of stopping time, to preserve a moment that the naked eye cannot hold, to capture truth spontaneous truth the depths of excitement in human spirit. All else will be forgotten but not the films. Generations from now will experience the excitement you've captured, it truly is a time capsule. I will not be totally satisfied until I know you're at the right angle at the right time, to capture a crescendo of emotion that happens so quickly, so spontaneously. What you have done was good, but I want the best, the whole picture, cause and effect. I want crowd reaction wide lens shots, depths of emotion, timing. I know we can do it.

It is my dream and goal to capture truth. We should dedicate ourselves to this. The person who makes a success of living, is the one who sees his goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly. That is dedication. There is no other way to perfection than dedication, perseverance. Just tell us what you need to make it happen. Take the leadership to direct the other cameramen. I enjoy working with you that is why I asked you to come, you have a gentle spirit that's very likable. Maybe I look at the world through rose-colored glasses but I love people all over the world. That is why stories of racism really disturb me.

You hurt my heart and soul when you told me of your boyhood in Texas. Because in truth I believe ALL men are created equal, I was taught that and will always believe it. I just can't conceive of how a person could hate another because of skin color. I love every race on the planet earth. Prejudice is the child of ignorance. Naked we come into the world and naked we shall go out. And a very good thing too, for it reminds me that I am naked under my shirt, whatever it's color.

I'm sorry to bring up such past issues, but in the car I was hurt by what you said. I'm so happy though that you managed to overcome your childhood past. Thank God that you've graduated from such beliefs of ignorance. I'm glad I've never experienced such things. Teach your kids to love all people equally. I know you will. I speak from my heart saying I love you and all people especially the children.

I'm glad God chose me and you.

Love M.J.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *NATURE* ∞

I try to be loving, and I try to find love and see love in all things. I love nature, I love the forest. I love the grace, the gentleness, the easiness of how gentle nature is. It is just giving. I love that.

– Michael Jackson

∞ NEVER ∞

We were at a shopping mall in Virginia one afternoon. Javon had gone to get the car. I was waiting with Mr. Jackson by the exit with mall security. Somebody had recognized him and a small crowd had formed. He was signing a few autographs, waving to folks. It was a friendly situation, not a mob or anything. As Javon pulled up and opened the door for Mr. Jackson, this guy from the back of the crowd yelled out, "Fuckin' child molester!" I heard it, plain as day. I looked at Javon; he'd heard it too. We were just praying that Mr. Jackson had missed it. But after we got in the car and drove for a bit, he leaned forward and said, "Guys, did you hear somebody say something back there?" "No, sir," I said. "I didn't hear anything. You hear anything, Javon?" Javon shook his head. "No, sir." Mr. Jackson said, "I thought I heard someone say something very mean. I could have sworn. You guys aren't lying to me, are you?" "No, sir." We didn't want to lie to him, but we knew what would happen if we confirmed it. Hearing someone call him a child molester? That would completely shut him down. He'd close the door and vanish into his room for at least a week, and we didn't want that to happen. We drove on with nobody saying anything for the next ten, fifteen minutes, and then out of the backseat he said, "I would never hurt a child. I would slit my wrists before I ever did anything to hurt a child."

– Bill Whitfield

∞ *NOTHING!* ∞

The police photographs? That they took of me? There was nothing that matched me to those charges. Nothing! That's why I'm sitting here talking to you today. There was not one iota of information that they found that could connect me to these charges! Nothing! No markings! The whole thing is a lie! ...The idea—it just isn't fair, what they put me through. 'Cause there wasn't one piece of information that says I did that, in any way! They turned my room upside-down, went through all my books, all my videotapes, all my private things, and they found nothing—nothing, nothing—that could say Michael Jackson did this. Nothing! To this day, nothing. Still, nothing... *Nothing, nothing, nothing!*

– Michael Jackson

∞ *NUTS OVER* ∞

There are people that I am in love with, totally in love with them. I would die for them. I love Michelangelo. I love Charlie Chaplin with all my heart. I love Walt Disney. These are the people I am nuts over. These are my people. I love the great ones.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *PARADOX* ∞

When we first met, around 1988, I was struck by the combination of charisma and woundedness that surrounded Michael. He would be swarmed by crowds at an airport, perform an exhausting show for three hours, and then sit backstage afterward, as we did one night in Bucharest, drinking bottled water, glancing over some Sufi poetry as I walked into the room, and wanting to meditate. That person, whom I considered (at the risk of ridicule) very pure, still survived—he was reading the poems of Rabindranath Tagore when we talked the last time, two weeks ago [2009]. Michael exemplified the paradox of many famous performers, being essentially shy, an introvert who would come to my house and spend most of the evening sitting by himself in a corner with his small children.

– Deepak Chopra

∞ *PRAISE* ∞

On my second trip to Neverland, Michael Jackson hosted a private lunch. He asked us all to connect by holding hands and saying praise. He said a prayer. The peeping sun rays shot through the house setting in his honor. His energy was spiritually magnetic, encapsulating each of us with his enigmatic aura, leaving all of us in tears. He was an incredible light. I believe God was his guide: that is how he lived and coped in this cruel world.

– Taymoor Marmarchi

Even if things seem bad at the moment, still give praise to God.

– Michael Jackson

∞ PREPARATION ∞

It sounds strange, I think, but it's the truth: I was really being geared up for Michael Jackson's preparation ... We always talked about how he prepared to do his music, how he prepared for the concerts. He taught me what he did: how to make a *Thriller* album, a *Bad* album, with all the details involved. It was all the validation I needed: to know that I had to focus on my craft and never falter. Because what he did—and how he did it—was psychotic. He helped me get to a level where I was able to win three titles playing Shaquille because of my preparation, my study. That's the mentality I have—it's not an [athletic] type. Not from Michael Jordan. It does not come from other athletes. It's from Michael Jackson.

– Kobe Bryant

I want to thank Michael for opening up so many doors for African Americans, to be on daytime shows, late night shows. He allowed Kobe and I to have our jerseys in people's homes across the world, because he was already there and he opened all those doors for us.

– Earvin "Magic" Johnson

∞ *THE PUNCHLINES* ∞

He was busy in the mid-1980s and I didn't expect to see him again. Yet a few months later, he called. "Hello Bob, this is Michael," he said. "Do you think Hazel George is still alive?" I said I didn't know but would find out. George was Disney's longtime nurse who also exchanged studio gossip with him. I found out that Hazel was retired yet still living near the Disney lot in Burbank. "I'd love to talk to her," Jackson said. "Can you arrange it?" I did, and a few days later, Jackson picked me up at my house in his chauffeured limo, and I directed the driver to Hazel's bungalow. Hazel had aged since I interviewed her for the biography, and I found that I would have to prompt her. I had recorded the stories she once gave me and had brought the tapes along, so I played them back and let her deliver the punchlines. Jackson was fascinated but scarcely said a word. When we finished, Hazel said to Jackson, "Come back and see me, and don't bring him." She meant me. Michael continued to visit Hazel for almost ten years. He brought her classical music CDs or had flowers delivered to her, probably until her death on March 12, 1996.

– Bob Thomas

∞ *PURE LOVE* ∞

Every time Michael Jackson breathed, he inhaled the world's suffering and exuded pure love.

– June Gatlin

∞ *RACISM* ∞

I don't understand racism. We are all the same and I have the perfect hypothesis to prove it. I play in all those countries, and they cry in all the same places in my show. They laugh in the same places. They become hysterical in the same places. They faint in the same places. And that's the perfect hypothesis: there is a commonality that *we are all the same*.

– Michael Jackson

∞ RELIGION ∞

I avoid using the term *religion*, because many people say “my religion this” and “my religion that.” Why should it be *my* religion? I just believe what’s in the Bible with regard to which religion is involved. I simply believe... I believe in it, and I get down on my knees every night and thank God and ask Him to lead the way.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A REPLICA* ∞

Music started with nature. Music is nature. Birds make music. Oceans make music. Wind makes music. Any natural sound is music. And, that's where it started. You see, we're just making a replica of nature.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *RESPECT* ∞

I respect the secrets and magic of nature. That's why it makes me so angry when I see these things that are happening, that every second, I hear, the size of a football field is torn down in the Amazon. I mean, that kind of stuff really bothers me. That's why I write these kinds of songs, you know. It gives some sense of awareness and awakening and hope to people. I love the planet. I love the trees. I have this thing for trees—the colors and changing of leaves. I love it. I respect those kind of things.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *RESILIENT* ∞

I try so hard to block out negativity. I really wish that negativity and hate didn't exist in this world.

And the more you hit something hard, the more hardened it becomes—the stronger it becomes. And that's what's happened: I'm resilient. I have rhinoceros skin. Nothing can hurt me. Nothing.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *SATISFACTION* ∞

I just love working hard on something. Putting it together, sweating over it, and then sharing it with people, and having them love it. And, I always pray that they like it. And, that's what gives me great satisfaction as an artist.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *TO SAVE SOMEONE* ∞

One day, I think I'd like to be a teacher or a social worker...anything, really, that involves children. It would be marvelous to be able to help foster kids who otherwise would only know poverty and despair in their lives. I guess that's about the greatest thing you can do: to save someone from a bad life, and help to give it some meaning.

– Michael Jackson

∞ A SECOND CHANCE ∞

He had one habit that shows his character and way of thinking: He used to flip over beetles that had ended up on their backs. We were out walking with him when he was in Ireland and he turned around every beetle that he saw. My friend has a phobia and couldn't understand why on Earth he would do that. Michael just said, "Everyone has the right to live. Everyone has the right to a second chance."

– Adriana Lucas

Security! <laughs> Could you get this bug? I don't want anybody to step on this. Don't kill it, though. Don't kill it! Thank you...

– Michael Jackson

∞ *SELFLESS* ∞

The more I work on this docuseries, the more it becomes crystal clear that the world desperately needs someone like Michael Jackson more than ever right now. Unfortunately, a lot of people completely took him for granted while he was physically here with us. Now, the world is slowly starting to realize how rare and special someone like Michael Jackson truly was. In a society that rewarded the selfish, Michael Jackson was the definition of *selfless*. He was *love*. He was *hope*. He was *light*. He was someone who transcended all religions, ages, races, and politics.

– Taj Jackson

∞ SERENITY ∞

I don't think Michael ever had the right to be happy. Perhaps I witnessed one of his rare moments of happiness: the encounter with Olodum, in Salvador, in 1996. There, in Pelourinho, to the sound of the drums, I saw a boy playing. He danced and jumped euphorically. I'm sure that moment was marked forever in his life. I think he was a person looking for serenity. Happiness, he knew he wouldn't find it. The stage lights were not enough to illuminate such visceral suffering. If we think about his story, everything he lived. A black boy in the United States at that time, without a right to childhood, mistreated by his father. I read that he had such a panic about his father that he vomited when he approached. Michael was massacred, the target of attacks, many lies were told about him. The whitening process, for example. It started with vitiligo. It was not an option. I saw. I touched his skin. There were few black spots on his arm. We met in Salvador, when he found Olodum. I didn't want to give an interview. But when he saw that people recognized me on the street, he wanted to meet me. We made an appointment to meet at Morro Dona Marta, in Rio. He spent 15 minutes sitting with me on a ledge, talking. I was the one who was interviewed. Michael wanted to know how a poor, black woman had managed to work as a reporter for the country's main broadcaster and be successful. He listened to me with humility, the greatest interest. It was a special moment, one of the most striking in my professional life. I hope that Michael has finally found serenity.

– Glória Maria

∞ SLEEP ∞

I asked him up in Denver, “Do you work out?” and he said “No, I should, shouldn’t I?” He was really guilty about it. I said, “Hey, whatever you’re doing is working.” He was so much fun to be around. It wasn’t all darkness. We’d laugh so much. He had a great sense of humor, loved practical jokes....We’d be walking along and he’d break out into song. But not like Michael Jackson. He would sing like it was a man in the shower, just singing. I hated to see that joy go out of his life because he was a very joyful person. He was a happy person and just great fun to be around.... [When I first met him,] he had a red corduroy shirt and black pants on and loafers that were kind of broken down in back. That’s the way he dressed most of the time when I knew him. When he wasn’t in public, he lived so simply. Michael never wore any jewelry, no rings, no belts, no watches, nothing, ever. The only time he wore those things were onstage. I was just so impressed with how simply he lived.... I spent a lot of time with him during that time, especially after that 2003 thing, and he couldn’t sleep. Michael usually tried to turn in around 11 o’clock and sometimes he’d fall asleep, but even if he did, he’d wake up again and so he’d always ask me, “Is it okay if I wake you up?” and I said “Hell, yeah, come bang on my door,” which he would do, and then he would always worry. He said, “Oh, you’re not getting any sleep,” and I said “Well, if I’m too tired, I’ll go grab a nap in the afternoon.” We’d just hang out like that in the middle of the night until morning came.

– David Nordahl

∞ *SO SILLY* ∞

Michael Jackson was just amazing. He wrote the songs and co-created all the dance sequences you see in *Captain EO* with his choreographer, Jeffrey Hornaday. It was magical to see this man in action. Yet, every morning, he would have several flats of seedless green grapes brought in. Before we went to work, Michael and the puppeteers would go to his trailer and have grape fights. Yes, really. Grape fights! It was so silly and so much fun. It happened every day for three months.

– Terri Hardin

∞ *SOUL* ∞

Ever since I was a child, I realized I had a lot of love to share from my soul. The black tradition is a tradition of soul, which is a gift of love and joy. Soul is the most precious thing you can share, because you're sharing yourself and the world needs that gift now more than ever. The child with AIDS in the ghetto is waiting for you, along with the starving people in Africa and everyone else who needs healing. Make the world more beautiful by sharing with me the wonderful feeling you get, when your soul is lifted up to become pure love.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *A SPECIAL GUY* ∞

We went to Michael Jackson's New York apartment. Our first encounter with him. What I knew about him is what you read in magazines: eccentricities, masks on his face and his dread of germs. I had told Luciano [Pavarotti], who was always outgoing and sociable, that most likely Michael Jackson would not like his strong handshakes, pats on the back and the hugs he gave us so freely, and I told him not to be disappointed if Jackson kept his distance, surrounded by bodyguards. "He's a special guy," I said. Michael opened the door for us personally, wearing a white T-shirt and jeans. He was alone and immediately ran to greet Luciano with a warm hug. He sat on the couch between us and started talking with a boy's enthusiasm. After a few minutes, Luciano looked at me over his glasses, and in his native dialect, he said emphatically: "But what a bunch of nonsense did you tell me?!"

– Adua Veroni

∞ *STRENGTH* ∞

When people ask me where I get my strength from, I tell them that I look at the man Michael Jackson looks at when he looks at the man in the mirror.

– Muhammad Ali

When you are behind bars with no hope of release, you need to find strength wherever you can. Personally, I found strength in Michael Jackson.

– Nelson Mandela

∞ *STUDY THE GREATS* ∞

MJ will be my new name. No more Michael Jackson. I want a whole new character, a whole new look. I should be a totally different person. People should never think of me as the kid who sang *ABC* [or] *I Want You Back*. I should be a new, incredible actor/singer/dancer that will shock the world. I will do no interviews. I will be magic. I will be a perfectionist, a researcher, a trainer, a master. I will be better than every great actor, roped into one. I *must* have the most incredible training system. To dig and dig and dig, until I find. I will study and look back on the whole world of entertainment and perfect it. Take it steps further from where the greats left off.

Believe in yourself. Study the greats and become greater. And be a scientist: Dissect. Dissect.

– Michael Jackson

☽ SUNSHINE ☽

When Michael visited the orphanage St. Ecatarina before his *History* concert in Bucharest, we were the only reporters who were allowed to follow him. Michael was distressed. He told me: "There are thousands of children in orphanages in Romania. Most of them have lost their parents, but some were rejected from their families." Michael sat on the floor with dozens of kids around him. He was very relaxed and smiled a lot. The children between two and four years curiously observed him at first, but when Michael started to put together some Lego bricks, they quickly joined in the game. Michael did not have any fear of contact, although some of the children had AIDS. He gently picked up a baby who had been abandoned on the doorsteps of the institute only days earlier. A little girl called Maria started to put candy into his mouth, which was a very moving moment. These children had never known the warmth of a home, nobody wanted them. Their eyes were sad and fearful. For one day, Michael brought a bit of sunshine into their lives. During his visit, the whole orphanage was filled with a cheerful atmosphere, contrary to the usual sadness. He distributed gifts, flowers, toys and played with the children for hours. A staff member said to me: "I have never seen the children that happy. For them it was like Christmas!" Michael donated a considerable sum to the director of the institute in the name of the *Heal the World Foundation*, which he founded to help children. It was obvious that Michael did this from his heart, as there were no journalists allowed; he only made an exception for *Bravo*. In the evening, Michael went sightseeing in Bucharest and did a tour of the majestic palace, where he also attended a traditional show in the great hall and gave a speech

about his concern for children around the world. “Children are our future! They are the most important thing we have. My greatest wish is that politicians thought more before sending their children to war.” Other superstars lie in their whirlpools, drink champagne and enjoy their life while Michael spent his time and energy on helping children. And whenever he did, you could tell that he did it from his heart!

–Alex Gernandt

∞ *SURPASSED IT* ∞

“I want a metal dress from head to toe with which to dance,” said Michael. The idea was taken with reserve by others who said they were concerned that Michael couldn’t dance in a metallic costume. It was too dangerous. Even Dennis and I said it would be too bulky and could get hurt. But, Michael was sure it would work. To inspire us, Michael lent us a collection of books by the Japanese artist Soroyama. Dennis and I knew that if we could offer Michael a second metal skin, as Soroyama did with his sexy robots, not only would we have achieved the intended goal but we would have surpassed it. We found an ambivalent and elastic aluminum to which we adapted Michael’s measurements and customized for his body. The material was thin as silk paper, weighed nothing, and was perfectly chromed. In the spotlight, Michael seemed to have been painted in chrome and silver like a Soroyama robot. One of the biggest challenges was to build the helmet so that it contained the headphones. And for each of them it would be different. Look at the bulky and heavier headphones and put them on the head of a mannequin, and sculpt around. It was what we had to do. The helmet was so tight that I needed a shoehorn to get Michael to wear it before every show. It had to be as close to his face as possible to get the view he was looking for.

– Michael Bush

∞ *SWEEPING FLOORS* ∞

Even if you're sweeping floors or painting ceilings, do it better than anybody in the world, no matter what it is that you do. Be the best at it, and have a respect for others, and be proud of yourself and be honorable.

– Michael Jackson

∞ SYMPATHY ∞

I tried to teach Michael about the world through documentaries. One day, Michael and I watched a film about the less fortunate children in Africa. The state of their lives brought us to tears. Michael, sympathetic at the age of 14, turned to me and said, “One day, Mom, I’m going to do something about it.” Many years later, he did. Michael surprised me on a trip to New York. We went to the airport hangar where I witnessed boxes of food, goods, and emergency supplies being loaded onto several planes lined up on the runway. I was proud to know that my son followed his words.

– Katherine Jackson

∞ *TEDDY BEAR* ∞

When I got to the store, I must have bought about a dozen magazines. Publications about big and beautiful houses, about fashion and the music industry. I took everything I thought would interest you. I was supposed to be walking around the toy section near the checkout when I saw a medium-sized, light-brown teddy bear. It was cute, I thought. I thought it would be a good joke to give him the teddy bear, so I bought it and put it in a brown paper bag. I arrived at the doctor's office and gave Michael all the magazines I chose. He seemed happy with all my choices. He thanked me for bringing them—he always thanked me. When I was about to leave, I gave him the brown paper bag in which the teddy bear was and said to him, "Here it is in case you feel lonely at night, he will keep you company." I then said goodbye and said I would be there the next morning to pick him up. He said good night to me but he still hadn't looked inside the bag.

The next day, I arrived at the doctor's office around 9 a.m. and told the ward that I was there to pick up Michael. I made the limo park at the VIP entrance so that he could get out of the office and enter it directly. The nurse came to the door and said that he would be ready in a few minutes. I did my usual security check around me to make sure there were no cameras or paparazzi, etc. The door opened, and Michael came out. He smiled and said, "Good morning, Mike." When I was going to say "Good morning" back, I saw that in his hands, holding against his chest, was the teddy bear that I had given him. It was the only thing he brought with him—he left all the magazines behind. It made me realize how sensitive and appreciative he was by small gestures of affection.

– Michael La Perruque

∞ *THANKFUL* ∞

I am sensitive to other people's feelings and emotions, and I am very thankful. I don't know if I could have done what I have done without the help of other people on the way, really. Even those who don't know how much they helped me, I thanked them later. Even those who do things from a distance and don't know that it is affecting me from another place—like writers and entertainers, people who died before I was just a toddler.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT US* ∞

The song is, in fact, about the pain of prejudice and hate and is a way to draw attention to social and political problems. I am the voice of the accused and the attacked. I am the voice of everyone. I am the skinhead, I am the Jew, I am the black man, I am the white man. I am not the one who was attacking. It is about the injustices to young people, and how the system can wrongfully accuse them.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THIS IS IT* ∞

I really feel that nature is trying to compensate for man's mismanagement of the planet. The planet is sick, like a fever. If we don't fix it now, it is at the point of no return. This is our last chance to fix this problem that we have, or it's like a runaway train. The time has come. *This is it*. People are always saying, "Oh they, they'll take care of it." "The government will do it. They'll..." They who? It starts with us. *Us*. Or else, it'll never be done.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *THE THRILL* ∞

There have been times right before a show when certain things were bothering me—business or personal problems. I would think, “I don’t know how to go through with this. I don’t know how I’m going to get through the show. I can’t perform like this.” But, once I get to the side of the stage, something happens. The rhythm starts and the lights hit me, and the problems disappear. This has happened so many times. The thrill of performing just takes me over. It’s like God saying, “Yes, you can. Yes, you can. Just wait. Wait till you hear this. Wait till you see this.” And, the backbeat gets in my backbone and it vibrates and it just takes me. Sometimes, I almost lose control and the musicians say, “What is he doing?” and they start following me. You change the whole schedule of a piece. You stop, and you just take over from scratch and do a whole other thing. The song takes you in another direction.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *TRAUMATIZED* ∞

Several years ago, Jackson's doctor gave a press conference in which he claimed that Jackson suffered from vitiligo. Since nobody knew what he was talking about, we never heard of him again. But, I knew what he was talking about. Indeed, I too have been afflicted with this disease called vitiligo, since my birth. The disease is neither suffering, nor fatal, nor contagious. But, it can have a dramatic side. To simplify, let's say that vitiligo causes an absence of pigmentation of the skin. That's why I am whiter than white and why I have white hair for a long time. That's why I burn in the sun in less than 5 minutes. Today, I do not care but for several years, I was traumatized. It is that the disease progresses. First, we notice nothing. Then appear on the skin white patches that we try to hide. Then the hairs turn white, then the hair. A few years later, we are white from head to toe. I dressed myself from head to neck for a long time and I dyed myself, eyebrows, eyelashes and hair. Then, when I was old enough to have "normal" white hair, I moved on. Without forgetting the horrors of this horrible transition. Michael Jackson

suffers from vitiligo. Michael Jackson is black. I lived a drama, Michael Jackson lives a tragedy. For me, vitiligo was white on white, not enough to whip a cat, for him it is white on black, white plates on a black background. The horror, the temptation, no doubt, of suicide. Jackson tries all the remedies (there are none), tries all the therapies (there is none). He resorts to plastic surgery, which does not help. He wears makeup, everyone laughs. He is becoming more and more white. Then it is all white. He is the object of all jokes and all insults. His black fellow citizens accuse him of wanting to be white and betraying his race. Jackson disappeared for several years. Now he is back and said to be whiter than ever. We laugh, we laugh, we insult. Not me! I don't need anything and I'm not asking you for anything. But, now that you know, I would be grateful if you laugh a little less when you think of Michael Jackson.

– Pierre Bourgault

∞ *TRUTH* ∞

It doesn't have to be true to be believed. Tell a lie often enough and people will believe it...I told the truth and told them everything about me, and they twisted it around. I don't know what to do anymore. I tell the truth and it doesn't work.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *UNNECESSARY* ∞

The last time I was here (in Britain), I flew Mickey and Minnie Mouse from Euro Disney to a hospital in London for the sick kids and took them a load of toys and things to cheer them up. The next day's papers said, *Wacko Jacko Snubs Sick Children*. That really hurt me. I tried to help those children. It was cruel and unnecessary.

– Michael Jackson

∞ VICTORIA FALLS ∞

After working with Michael for the first time on his *Dangerous* tour, I realized that every time I agreed to one of his adventures, at the end of the journey, I always ended up somewhere I'd never been before. From the beginning, he always loved the creative process with me and he made me feel that. I remember getting the call at three or four am while we were setting up the *This Is It* concerts. "It's Michael, aren't you asleep?" Yeah, I'm awake. "No, aren't you sleeping?" Michael, I'm not sleeping, really. What do you need? "Victoria Falls." That's all he said. Michael spoke in mysteries. Like, he just threw stuff at you like that. He wanted the footage of Victoria Falls to pour out onto the group behind him on stage as a reminder to the audience of the majesty, wonder and splendor of the world. I remember the very next day saying to him, "You know, this is in Africa. It's a long way off!" And he answered: "That's why we should have it!" Creatively, he knew no bounds and it was fun. Everything was possible. I'm going to miss the phone calls inviting me to go on my next trip. I'm going to miss coming to his house and spending time with him. There's a part of Michael that will always be with me. I know my love for him will last forever. The hardest thing will be that he won't be in the room, that I won't laugh with him, smile with him, look for him and ask myself: "What is this crazy mind of yours going through now?" I'm going to miss his unconditional loving heart the most. He was a deep and deeply spirited man!

– Kenny Ortega

∞ VITILIGO ∞

Why are you wearing a mask? Because with time, the condition of my skin has gotten worse, I hate to say it. I have vitiligo and I'm completely allergic to the sun. I shouldn't even be in the open air, actually. Even if I'm in the shade, sun rays can destroy my skin.

– Michael Jackson

∞ WARM ∞

Michael always called me into his very warm room because he loved the heat. He did not like the sun because of his skin. But, he loved his room so hot you could not breathe. And, he had the heater on the other side and then a heater in front of him and a humidifier, blowing because he loved steam, which moistened his voice. So, I'm sitting in this room, pulling off my jacket. It's really hot in here. But, to give you the best description of Michael, he was a "warm," affectionate man, and when you were behind closed doors, he talked about things you could never have imagined. About his life as a youth, his life with the friends he had and how everything that came into his life, like sound engineer Bruce Swedien. We all became friends to the point that we all had our own nickname for him. I gave him the nickname *Midas the King* but when we talked, I called him *Michael* because it was only out of respect. Michael means "a reflection of God," and I always thought we should call people by the name that God gave them.

– Teddy Riley

∞ WALKING ∞

I used to walk the street asking for people to be my friend. It's true. In Encino, right down there. People would look at me and go, "Michael Jackson!" I just wanted to talk to somebody. I was up there alone in the house, and my mother and father were downstairs watching television. And, I was up in my old room, and all my brothers and stuff had moved out because they were married and stuff. And, I was up there all alone and you can't go anywhere. You feel like a prisoner and you feel like you are going to die. And, that's it. I am walking, and I would just go walking down the street and traffic would get backed up, and people would be taking pictures. I knew I looked sad, and some people would come up and talk and they would go, "What are you doing?" I'd go, "I am walking." They'd go, "Why are you walking? Where are all the guards?" I said, "I don't feel like all that. I just want to walk, and I am looking for someone to talk to me." So they would talk to me. I've done that many times. I'd ask people to be my friend, and they'd say, "Sure." It's true. I'd go to the parks. Then I realized that, that could be dangerous too, but I was hurting that much.

– Michael Jackson

∞ WEARABLE ART ∞

To us, Michael was a teacher who changed our professional lives in ways we never expected. The depth and complexities of our creations often surprised us, and that was because Michael was our muse. His philosophy was to always try something new, to make people do a doubletake. His philosophy became our own. He taught us to expect change and to look for laughter and humor in every day. Together, we would go on to create what he liked to call *wearable art*. Dressing him was a multilayered process of conveying a message, evoking an emotion, and stimulating a thought in anyone who laid eyes on him. His clothing was both a reflection of and companion to his lyrics, short films, special effects and tours. It contributed to a greater whole.

– Michael Bush

∞ WHAT'S IMPORTANT ∞

I'm a black American. I am *proud* to be a black American. I am *proud* of my race. I am *proud* of who I am. I have a lot of *pride* and *dignity*.... [T]his is the situation: I have a skin disorder that destroys the pigmentation of the skin. It's something that I cannot help, okay? But, when people make up stories that I don't want to be who I am, it hurts me. It's a problem for me, okay? I can't control it, okay? But, what about all the millions of people who sit out in the sun, to become darker, to become other than what they are, no one says nothing about that! It's in my family—my father said it's on his side. I can't control it. I don't understand. I mean, it makes me very sad. I don't want to go into my medical history because that's something that's private, but that's the situation here. We tried to control it, and using makeup evens it out because it makes blotches on my skin—I have to even out my skin! But, you know what's funny? Why is *that* so important, you know? That's not important to me. I'm a great fan of art; I love Michelangelo. If I had the chance to talk to him or read about him, I would want to know about what inspired him to become who he is—the anatomy of his craftsmanship—not about who he went out with last night, or why he decided to sit out in the sun so long—“What's wrong with him?!” I mean, *that's* what's important to me.

– Michael Jackson

∞ WHY? ∞

I met Michael more than 20 years ago; I went to teach him meditation at Neverland. He was very shy, very introverted, but very curious about consciousness and spirituality. You know, while the world called him weird, he wondered why the world was so weird. He'd ask me, "Why do people go to war? Why is there genocide? What's happening in Sudan? Why have we killed the environment? Why is there racism and bigotry and hatred and prejudice?" We talked about starving children in Mumbai, and he would start to cry. Or, we'd start to talk about the trophy-hunting in Canada of the grizzly bear, and he would start to cry. In his mind, the world was psychotic.

– Deepak Chopra

∞ *WHY I LOVE HIM* ∞

I remember one day in 1996, I was waiting for Michael at home when there was a fire near his recording studio. I was worried because he was late. One journalist said that a man had saved a child's life from the fire. Finally, Michael got home. When I saw him, I started crying. He was wearing an inhaler. He hugged me and told me that the firemen were late and there was a little kid in the building, so he had to do it. That's why I love him so much.

– Lisa Marie Presley

∞ *WISHES* ∞

I believe in wishes and in a person's ability to make a wish come true. Whenever I saw a sunset, I would quietly make my secret wish right before the sun tucked under the western horizon and disappeared. It would seem as if the sun had taken my wish with it.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *HIS WORLD* ∞

He's sort of a fawn in a burning forest. It's a nice place where Michael comes from. I wish we could all spend some time in his world.

– Steven Spielberg

∞ *THE WORLD* ∞

Michael was magic, pure and simple. He was a man who believed in the goodness of mankind and embodied pure, unconditional love for the world.... I remember that he told me once to never rush an emotion, that everything in life has a rhythm, and that it is the pauses and silences that speak the truth. He understood this better than anyone; he had a way of quietly inspiring everyone around him to be better than ever thought they could be. He helped so many, and inspired us all. Michael believed in magic. He believed that we could change the world, and he had such unconditional love that when you were around him, you couldn't help but believe it too.

– Kellie Parker

I want to touch the world. I want to touch the heart, the emotions of the entire world. From the farmer in Ireland to the lady who scrubs toilets in Harlem. I mean, I want to reach every demographic.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *YOU ARE LOVED* ∞

If you enter this world knowing you are loved, and you leave this world knowing the same, then everything that happens in between can be dealt with.

Before you know if you have red hair or brown, before you know if you are black or white, before you know of what religion you are a part, you have to know that you are loved.

– Michael Jackson

∞ *YOU ARE VERY SPECIAL* ∞

The most remarkable outcome from working at Neverland is how much we became a family. In working with him, he made me understand that being able to give to other people is not something everyone can do. Most people don't know that Michael took so much time to every detail and the purpose of Neverland. The message was "You are very special" for each visitor of Neverland. We represented him and the love and care that he wanted people to feel. So many children visited who had terminal illnesses and it was very touching to see them suddenly come to life. Each group brought their own energy and left us with a sense of gratitude for spending time with them. We were doing big and small events on a weekly basis whether Michael was at home or not. Michael had kids visiting the ranch for 6 to 7 months out of the year. It was amazing to see disadvantaged kids spending the day being able to do whatever they wanted. Michael also did a lot of good things for the local people. There was a school across the street and let the trainers of the zoo take animals there, as a show-and-tell for the kids. They could touch the snakes or parrots. He also did this for other schools in Santa Barbara. Very few times did Michael come out to greet event guests. If he did, the day would suddenly become about him, and he avoided attention. He wanted the children to enjoy themselves. He was so charismatic that he could have had ants following him. To be a part of providing a safe place to raise his children and seeing him as a parent was just the most amazing thing. How he cared for them, and they loved him so much. It was a privilege to be a part of that, making his home safe for him and his family. I would say to him when he returned home after a longer absence, "Welcome

home, Neverland missed you!” Neverland was a living thing that required him, that missed him, needed his touch, his warmth and thoughts. He used to give me a smile then. His vision was our purpose and mission. He was the heartbeat of Neverland and he did breathe life into it. He wasn’t this eccentric person everybody thought he was. It was never hard working for him because of his generosity. He was a down-to-earth, funny, and spontaneous person. Michael drove his golf cart to one of the two schools across the road of Neverland, and he would play basket with the students, hang out—and, all of a sudden, he calls us and there is this huge group of kids coming into the ranch, spending a couple of hours at Neverland having fun. His message is timeless, I think, and will go on forever. In all he did and achieved, he was always spreading a good message. He could have given up many times—when he was publicly scrutinized—but he kept that good fight up even till the end. After his passing, I realized how much being around him, being influenced by him and his generosity, changed me in a profound way. Realizing his message, which was the power of love, is really the only way to get through things. I wish I had the chance to thank him for this, but there was never an opportunity to have a personal exchange to express gratitude from one person to another. But, maybe he did know how I felt. I am sure he did. If I could say anything now, it would be, “I love you. Thank you for being my friend.”

– Violet Gaitan-Silva