

## "In the Closet"

*Date range assessed by the facts that Michael asked Madonna to record the song in March 1991, and "in the summer of 1991... after working on 'Remember the Time' and 'In the Closet'", Michael wanted to keep creating new music with Riley (Mike Smallcombe, "Making Michael"); this means that recording must have stopped before summer began, around May 1991.*

Teddy Riley, co-writer, producer, ["MusicRadar" \(July 3, 2009\) \(archived\)](#)

Now, In the Closet was something Michael came up with, and it came out exactly as he wanted the track to be. He kind of put his vocals on a Dictaphone when he was in another room. He'd often record the vocals on a Dictaphone and take them into the studio and then see how it would all work out.

This is some of Michael's more explicit material on there, in terms of lyrical content [laughs]! But it didn't surprise you at the time. No, not at all.

Chris Cadman's "Michael Jackson the Maestro"

'He (Michael) did a demonstration record for me,' said Riley, 'and he was the one who actually came up with the structure of how the song should come out. He would work out these string lines on the synthesiser, then he came up with these mouth sounds that were very percussive – sort of like a drum machine, but different. And it all worked.'

Brad Sundberg, studio engineer, [Facebook post \(November 28, 2017\)](#)

The "Mystery Girl" Princess [(Princess Stephanie)] joined us at Larrabee Studios for her vocals on "Closet". She was very sweet, very pretty and quite shy. I seem to remember that she was there within a few weeks of Nancy Reagan. Nancy came for a visit with Michael after the Secret Service spent a few hours checking the studio for anything out of the ordinary. It was a studio - everything is out of the ordinary. Both guests were kind and respectful to us.

Madonna, Michael's first choice for duet before deciding on Princess Stephanie, [Rolling Stone \(October 19, 2009\) \(archived\)](#)

There was a period of time when we hung out. He wanted to work with me, I think he wanted to get to know me, and I wanted to do the same. When you write with somebody, it's a weird experience, you feel vulnerable and shy... To write songs together is a very intimate experience, like getting tossed into a juggernaut. "On your mark, get set, create!" You have to get past these hurdles, which are, "I want to impress this person, but will they think my ideas are stupid? What if their ideas are stupid? Can I be honest with them? Will they be offended?" You end up talking and gabbing and socializing, and you have to do that in order to get to the next level, to be creative. So that's what we were doing: watching movies, having dinner, hanging out, going to the Oscars, being silly, seeing if we could work. He got relaxed. He took off his sunglasses, had a glass of wine, I got him to laugh.

...

[MTV Video Music Awards \(September 13, 2009\)](#)

I can't say we were great friends, but in 1991 I decided I wanted to get to know him better. I asked him out to dinner: I said, "My treat, I'll drive, just you and me." He agreed and showed up to my house without any bodyguards. We drove to the restaurant in my car. It was dark out, but he was still wearing sunglasses. I said, "Michael, I feel like I'm talking to a limousine, do you

think you could take off those glasses so I could see your eyes?" He paused for a moment, then he tossed the glasses out the window, looked at me with a wink and a smile and said, "Can you see me now, is that better?"

In that moment, I could see both his vulnerability and his charm. The rest of the dinner, I was hell-bent on getting him to eat French fries, drink wine, have dessert and say bad words, things he never seemed to allow himself to do. Later, we went back to my house to watch a movie and we sat on the couch like two kids, and somewhere in the middle of the film, his hand snuck over and held mine. It felt like he was looking for a friend more than a romance and I was happy to oblige him. And in that moment he didn't feel like a superstar, he felt like a human being. We went out a few more times together and then for one reason or another we fell out of touch.