

"This Time Around"

Date range assessed by the fact that "After the Christmas break, which Michael spent with Lisa Marie, recording resumed in the warmth of Los Angeles... Another hitmaker Michael asked to contribute a track was Atlanta-based producer/ songwriter Dallas Austin... Michael invited up-and-coming hip-hop star Notorious B.I.G. to rap on the song, which he called 'This Time Around'." (Mike Smallcombe, "Making Michael") Rob Hoffman [confirms \(archived\)](#) that "For HIStory everything was recorded between January '94 and April of '95", so recording would have ended in April 1995.

Notorious B.I.G., rapper. Chris Cadman's "Michael Jackson the Maestro"

I got off the airplane somewhere in Texas, and answered my pager,' the late Notorious B.I.G. recalled in an interview in 1995. 'They were like, "Michael Jackson called – he wants to do a song with you!" I laughed 'cos I thought they were just frontin'... he wasn't in the studio when I did the song but when I was about to leave, he came through, listened to the joint, said he loved it and I jetted.

John Van Nest, engineer. [GearslutZ forum](#)

By the way, to elaborate a bit on the Notorious B.I.G. session, it was kinda like this. Michael used to call people to ask them to participate on albums. It was interesting knowing that nearly anyone on the planet would come to the phone if it were Michael calling. Anyway, I heard rumors that B.I.G. was going to come, and I was excited about that! I knew that I would be the one to record that, as I had recorded nearly all of that tune, "This Time Around". So, Dallas and I were expecting him any minute, and pretty much on time, Notorious strolls in. He was quite an imposing figure when he walked in, as he was quite popular at the time. I had no idea what to expect from him in terms of attitude, but he seemed nice when he walked in. No problem. But almost immediately, he blurted out, "Yo, Dallas, can I meet Mike?" To which, Dallas replied that he thought so. Biggie went on to talk about how much this opportunity meant to him, as Michael was his hero. Anyway, Dallas tells him that we're going to lay down the rap first, so Biggie heads in the booth, we get some headphone levels and get ready to start recording. So, we hit the big red button (on a Sony 3348 machine), and away we go. During his first take, Dallas and I looked at each other, because it was spot on. wow. I was impressed, and so was Dallas. We listened back, and Dallas was like, "Wow, I think we got it". As I recall, we took another take for good measure, but I'm fairly certain that we ended up using the first take. So, Notorious comes in, and asks if he can meet Michael now. We sent word to the back room where Michael was working that Biggie was finished and wanted to meet him. Simply for security, Michael's security would enter and make sure that no one was in the room that shouldn't be, and once that was confirmed (it was just me, Biggie and Dallas), Michael came in. Biggie nearly broke out in tears...I could tell how much this meant to him. Well, Michael could have this effect on anyone, even the most hardcore rappers! Biggie was tripping up on his words, bowing down and telling Michael how much his music had meant to him in his life. Michael was, as always, very humble and kept smiling while Biggie just went on and on how much he loved Michael. I watched Biggie just become this big butterball of a man, and it was really very sweet to witness. After all, we are all just people.

Michael finally asked to hear what we had done, and we popped it up on the big speakers and let her go. Michael LOVED it and was excited to tell Biggie that! "Oh, let's hear it again", I recall Michael saying, and we listened again. Michael just loved it...and thanked Biggie for coming all the way from Philadelphia. Biggie asked rather sheepishly whether he could get a photo, and Michael agreed. A shot was taken, we listened again, and Michael thanked Biggie. Michael said goodbye and stepped out, leaving Biggie standing there looking completely stunned. It will always remain a great, great memory.