

"Dirty Diana"

Date range (Westlake Sessions for the "Bad" album) confirmed in Mike Smallcombe's "Making Michael" ("In August 1986, after more than two years of on-off work, Michael was ready to join forces with the A-Team again, as he felt he had enough material to present to Quincy... In November 1986, Michael flew to New York to film a video for 'Bad'. It was the first time he filmed a video while an album was still in production, keeping him out of the studio for many weeks... With the 'Bad' video complete and the Christmas break over, Michael and the A-Team resumed recording at Westlake in early January 1987... Final mixes were completed on July 9, and the next day Bruce Swedien took the tapes to Bernie Grundman's for mastering.

Steve Stevens, guitarist. [The Eddie Trunk Podcast](#)

Steve Stevens: I was still living in New York, I had been out late the night before, and the phone rings. I thought it was a joke, "It's Quincy Jones". I'm like, "Yeah right" [laughs] and he goes, "No, don't hang up! This is really- I got your number from Ted Templeman."

"Oh, ok"

But the experience was great. There was no entourage, it was very similar to working with Billy Idol, where it's Billy, myself, and our producer Keith Forsey, and an engineer. And same with Michael. Walked into the studio, and it's Michael, Quincy, and his engineer Bruce [Swedien]. And it was very cool, man, it was low-key. They kind of just said this is the kind of melody we want and then, after that, do whatever the hell you want to do. So it wasn't very dissimilar to the way I was used to working.

Trunk: Steve, you know as well as I do that, today, when you get a call- When you would get a call to put a track down for something, or put a solo on something, a lot of times you never even get to meet the person you're working with, especially if it's a big artist. The producer just has you send them the file and they cut it in or whatever. So it is kind of cool that you actually worked with the guy, like when you were doing the solo. You worked with him in the studio, right?

Stevens: Yeah... with my first phone call with Quincy, I said, "Now Michael's gonna be there?" I had exactly that situation. I got called to do a Diana Ross tune, that actually Michael had written [Ed. ("Eaten Alive")] This was in New York, and I walk in, and I- for me, I couldn't even fathom the idea of the artist, who's record you're working on, wouldn't be there. And that's what happened. And it kinda, like, I went, "Wow, this is weird", you know man? I was not into it. So I said, "Michael's gonna be there?" And Quincy said, "Yeah, of course he's gonna be there, it's his record". I said, "Yeah, you'd be surprised" [laughs]

So yeah, he was there right from the beginning, and really had great direction and everything. I think this was a time, I got the impression that Quincy really was like a father figure to him. I mean, the guy couldn't have been more normal, and more inquisitive. I mean, he wanted to know about staging and lighting. He was getting ready to do his first big arena tour, and he wanted it to be like a rock tour, not an R&B tour, so he was asking me about lighting companies, sound companies, and asking me if I knew Mötley Crüe [laughs]

Trunk: He must've known you from Billy Idol, I mean you were all over MTV, so he must've- was he aware of your work, and did he know Billy stuff?

Stevens: Oh yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. I gotta tell you that, in between the takes, we started talking about stuff, and he did the most incredible David Lee Roth impression I've ever seen [laughs]

Trunk: Really?

Stevens: Yeah. It was incredible, he did the whole thing.

Trunk: You mean, singing? Or talking like him?

Stevens: No, no, doing the whole kind of "Look at all the people-" [Ed. Most likely referring to [this](#)] You know, he had him down, man. It was- he had obviously been a fan. So, I was like, "This is surreal, Michael Jackson doing a David Lee Roth impression" [laughs]

Trunk: Wow, so he really had an awareness of rock music. He wasn't just in his bubble... he knew Billy Idol, he knew you from Billy Idol's work... it sounds like he definitely had some appreciation for rock.

Stevens: Yeah, well he loved the big spectacle of rock shows, which is something that R&B artists- I guess Michael now is not just considered R&B, but certainly coming from Jackson 5, and then his first solo record "Off the Wall" was- he was looking to bring his thing to a bigger level, and in a live kind of situation. And he knew that rock n' roll was- we were the ones who were really spearheading that... I guess he had already been friends with the guys in Queen and stuff, and seen Queen shows, and so he was looking to do things in a more rock kind of atmosphere, I guess.

[Luka Neskovic interview](#)

So the phone rang, and I thought somebody was fucking with me, so I kinda hung up the phone and the phone rings again, and he goes, "Now don't hang up, because this is the real deal. I got your number from Ted Templeman, and we're working on Michael's follow-up to Thriller. Would you be interested in coming in and playing on the track?" So that's how that came about.

The version that I played on was- I think the track was proly about seven minutes long. They recorded much the same way that we did with Billy Idol, we always kinda prepared for dance remixes, extended versions, and we always knew that this kind of stuff would be played in dance clubs, so you needed material to do remixes and etc. So they explained to me that the song was gonna be edited down, but they were gonna give me this full version to play on, and there was maybe two minutes of guitar solo there, and then the actual song itself, so it was interesting how they went about doing it. Not that some of the things we did with Billy Idol, but obviously this was more of electronic stuff happening, electronic beats and things. It was not a big entourage or anything, it was just four guys in a studio just trying to make great music. That kind of put me at ease, but then you realize we're all just here to make music, and once we got down to it, all of that other stuff kinda fell away, and it was just spoke in musical terms, and Michael was really, really- very musical. The things that he requested and asked for were all really cool ideas, he understood what I was about, and was trying to get the best out of my performance. So it was a great, great session.

I had my preconceived ideas of maybe what I was coming into, and the first thing that struck me was the song's a lot darker and a lot heavier than I thought I would be playing on. And it seemed like it was a real edge of- kind of, almost underlying current of nastiness to it, you know? Which was great for me because as a guitar player, you kind of want to dig in and you want to play

aggressively and I was really glad that it wasn't like a pop song or something, it was like a real, dark- [it] allowed me to dig into the kind of heavier side of what I do.

Lisa Robinson interview, from her autobiography, "There Goes Gravity: A Life in Rock and Roll"

One of the things I stipulated about doing the track with Michael was that he be there in the studio when we did it. The first thing Michael said to me was that he liked my suit. He was really musically literate, down to things that most people might leave to the engineer. He knew exactly what he wanted.

Lisa Robinson's "There Goes Gravity: A Life in Rock and Roll" autobiography

In 1987, Steve Stevens told me, "One of the things I stipulated about doing the track with Michael was that he be there in the studio when we did it. The first thing Michael said to me was that he liked my suit. He was really musically literate, down to things that most people might leave to the engineer. He knew exactly what he wanted."