

"Song Groove (AKA Abortion Papers)"

Date range assessed by the facts in Mike Smallcombe's "Making Michael" ("Over the course of the second half of 1985 and most of 1986, Michael and the B-Team created many demos... Michael wrote several ballads, including 'Fly Away', 'Loving You', 'I'm So Blue'... and 'Price of Fame'... The potentially controversial 'Abortion Papers' is another... these songs were never fully completed and wouldn't be brought to the A-Team at Westlake"); vocals were most likely recorded in 1986.

Michael Jackson, Bad 25 album liner notes

I have to do it in a way so I don't offend girls who have gotten abortions or bring back guilt trips so it has to be done carefully. I have to really think about it.

Full Bad 25 album liner notes article for "Song Groove (AKA Abortion Papers)"

This is a song that Michael knew could be controversial, and, as a result, he spent a lot of time thinking about the story for the song and the voice through which the song should be told. The song is about a girl whose father is a priest and was raised in the Church and on the Bible. She gets married in the church, but decides, against the Bible, to have an abortion and she wants "abortion papers." As Michael indicated in his notes, "I have to do it in a way so I don't offend girls who have gotten abortions or bring back guilt trips so it has to be done carefully. I have to really think about it." This is an early example of a song with a controversial subject.

Matt Forger, studio engineer, "The Atlantic" (September 11, 2012) (archived)

This was a song that we initially missed during archiving. It was titled 'Song Groove' on the box so we overlooked it. Once we figured out what it was we started to put the pieces together. It was recorded by Brian Maloof and Gary O., a couple of engineers who worked with Michael for a brief time. When we heard it we knew it could be controversial, especially with what's been going on politically. But when you listen to the song there's a story being told. Michael really reflected on what the approach should be. He wasn't sure how to narrate it. There were different variations with vocals—he didn't want it to be judgmental. He was very clear about that. But he wanted to present a real, complicated situation.

"MJ Data Bank" (October 9, 2012) (archived)

The story of this double title reflects Jackson's way of working on song ideas: "When we did the research there were two tapes and each tape is a multi track analog tape saying Song Groove", recalls Forger. "But we didn't realize that Abortion Papers was recorded in two halves. Half of the song was one tape, half of the song was another tape. And while listening I said "this tape is half of another tape that we have". And then we did more research and we found another tape and we had to put the two halves together to get the complete recording".

...Musically, Song Groove hints at sound textures and designs that would be developed on Dangerous: the subdued yet tensed atmosphere, the machine and metallic sounds: they are already there. "In Song Groove there is an aggressive quality of the music that he was developing and writing", says Forger. "This was the time when, at Quincy's encouragements Michael wrote all the songs of the Bad album, as much as he could. I worked with Michael along with Bill Bottrell, John Barnes and Chris Currell. We were working with him at Hayvenhurst studios that Michael called the Laboratory. My job was to work with Michael and to get all these

song ideas that Michael was working on and developing: his production style, his writing style, his arrangement style. Everything about that was Michael developing this, which was fascinating for me to be able to observe. Much of these styles you can hear in the songs included in BAD 25 are developed in later albums”.